United Nations A/69/77

General Assembly

Distr.: General
22 April 2014

Original: English

Sixty-ninth session
Item 75 (a) of the preliminary list*
Oceans and the law of the sea

Report on the work of the Ad Hoc Working Group of the Whole on the Regular Process for Global Reporting and Assessment of the State of the Marine Environment, including Socioeconomic Aspects

Letter dated 22 April 2014 from the Co-Chairs of the Ad Hoc Working Group of the Whole addressed to the President of the General Assembly

We have the honour to transmit to you the attached report on the work of the Ad Hoc Working Group of the Whole on the Regular Process for Global Reporting and Assessment of the State of the Marine Environment, including Socioeconomic Aspects, which met at United Nations Headquarters on 31 March 2014, pursuant to paragraph 243 of General Assembly resolution 68/70. The report contains, inter alia, in section II, the agreed recommendations to the sixty-ninth session of the General Assembly and guidance for the Group of Experts of the Regular Process and the secretariat of the Regular Process concerning the preparation of the first global integrated marine assessment.

We kindly request that the present letter and the report be circulated as a document of the General Assembly under the agenda item entitled "Oceans and the law of the sea".

(*Signed*) João Miguel **Madureira**

(*Signed*) Fernanda **Millicay**

* A/69/50.

14-30726 (E) 050514

Please recycle

Report of the Ad Hoc Working Group of the Whole on the Regular Process for Global Reporting and Assessment of the State of the Marine Environment, including Socioeconomic Aspects

I. Report of the Ad Hoc Working Group of the Whole

1. Pursuant to paragraph 243 of General Assembly resolution 68/70, the fifth meeting of the Ad Hoc Working Group of the Whole on the Regular Process for Global Reporting and Assessment of the State of the Marine Environment, including Socioeconomic Aspects, was held at United Nations Headquarters in New York on 31 March 2014.

2. The Co-Chairs of the Working Group, João Miguel Madureira (Portugal) and Fernanda Millicay (Argentina), opened the meeting. Miguel de Serpa Soares, Under-Secretary-General for Legal Affairs, the Legal Counsel, delivered opening remarks on behalf of the Secretary-General.

3. Representatives of 68 Member States, 2 non-member States and 6 intergovernmental organizations and other bodies attended the meeting.[1]

4. The Joint Coordinators of the Group of Experts of the Regular Process established pursuant to paragraph 209 of General Assembly resolution 65/37 A, namely, Lorna Inniss (Barbados) and Alan Simcock (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland), also participated in the meeting.[2]

5. The following supporting documentation and information was available to the meeting: (a) the provisional agenda, annotated provisional agenda and format, including the proposed organization of work; and (b) information on the revised outline of the first global integrated marine assessment, prepared by the Group of Experts.

6. The Working Group adopted the agenda (see annex I to the present report) and agreed on the organization of work, as proposed by the Co-Chairs. A number of delegations made general statements and some delegations announced that they had contributed or intended to contribute to the voluntary trust fund for the purpose of supporting the operations of the Regular Process.

7. Under agenda item 4, the Co-Chairs presented the report of the Bureau of the Working Group and the Working Group took note of it.[3] In its consideration of agenda item 5, the Working Group considered the status of preparation of the first global integrated marine assessment and took note of the updated outline of the assessment. The Joint Coordinators of the Group of Experts addressed the Working Group on the appointments to the pool of experts, the designation and assignment of

[1] A complete list of participants is available on the website of the Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea of the Office of Legal Affairs of the Secretariat (http://www.un.org/Depts/los/global_reporting/global_reporting.htm).

[2] A list of the members of the Group of Experts, is available at www.un.org/Depts/los/global_reporting/Group_of_Experts_2013.pdf.

[3] The Bureau is composed of the following Member States: Argentina, Bulgaria, Chile, China, Ecuador, Estonia, Ghana, Greece, Kenya, Republic of Korea, Spain, Sri Lanka, Ukraine, United Republic of Tanzania and United States of America.

experts, the appointment of peer review panels and the challenges in meeting the time schedule for the preparation of the assessment. It was noted that Member States could facilitate the process of appointment of experts to the pool of experts in two ways: by nominating individual experts to address any gaps in expertise in the pool of experts; and by clarifying to regional groups that such nominations should be transmitted for appointment separately from any monthly list of candidatures for election.

8. With reference to the timetable for the preparation of the first global integrated marine assessment, the Working Group decided that the draft of the assessment would be sent to Member States and peer reviewers for their review in two instalments, with the initial draft chapters being circulated by the secretariat of the Regular Process at the end of June 2014 and the entire draft, including updated initial draft chapters, being circulated at the end of August 2014. Member States would then have the opportunity to submit comments on the initial draft chapters in July 2014, should they decide to do so, and to otherwise complete their review of the draft chapters by the end of October 2014.

9. Turning to agenda item 6, the Working Group considered the source of funding for issuance of the summary of the first global integrated marine assessment and agreed to recommend that the General Assembly recall its decision that the summary should be submitted by the Co-Chairs of the Working Group to be issued as a document of the Assembly.

10. Under agenda item 7, the Working Group considered the resources needed to support the Regular Process, including the status of the trust fund established for that purpose. The Working Group received a report from the Secretariat on the status of the Regular Process trust fund. The Secretariat emphasized that currently the funds in the trust fund could only facilitate participation of members of the Group of Experts from developing countries in one meeting of the Group of Experts. The Working Group was reminded that, without additional funding, it would not be possible for those members to attend additional meetings for the preparation of the first global integrated marine assessment.

11. In reference to the hosting of workshops in support of the first cycle of the Regular Process, a report was provided by the host country on the workshop held under the auspices of the United Nations for the northern Indian Ocean, the Arabian Sea, the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden and the Regional Organization for the Protection of the Marine Environment/Regional Commission for Fisheries area (Chennai, India, 27-29 January 2014). One of the co-organizers of the workshop for the South Atlantic, held in Grand Bassam, Côte d'Ivoire, from 28 to 30 October 2013, reported on its outcome. The Working Group took note of the summaries of these workshops (see A/68/766 and A/68/812, respectively). A representative of the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, speaking also on behalf of the United Nations Environment Programme, reported on the provision of technical and scientific support to the Regular Process.

12. The Working Group considered draft recommendations to the sixty-ninth session of the General Assembly and guidance for the Group of Experts and the secretariat of the Regular Process concerning the preparation of the first global integrated marine assessment, which had been proposed by the Co-Chairs on the basis of discussions with the Bureau of the Working Group. The Working Group

agreed on the text of the recommendations and the guidance (see section II of the present report).

II. Recommendations to the sixty-ninth session of the General Assembly and guidance for the Group of Experts and the secretariat of the Regular Process concerning the preparation of the first global integrated marine assessment

A. Recommendations to the sixty-ninth session of the General Assembly

13. The Ad Hoc Working Group of the Whole agrees on the following recommendations to be submitted to the General Assembly.

(1) The Ad Hoc Working Group of the Whole recommends that the General Assembly take note of the updated outline for the first global integrated marine assessment of the Regular Process for Global Reporting and Assessment of the State of the Marine Environment, including Socioeconomic Aspects (annex II to the present report).

(2) The Ad Hoc Working Group of the Whole recommends that the General Assembly recall its decision that the summary of the first global integrated marine assessment should be submitted by the Co-Chairs of the Working Group to be issued as a document of the Assembly.

(3) The Ad Hoc Working Group of the Whole recommends that the General Assembly recognize the important role of the Bureau of the Working Group in putting into practice the decisions and guidance of the Working Group during the intersessional period, pursuant to paragraph 205 of Assembly resolution 66/231, and requests the Bureau to continue its oversight of the progress of work in order to guide the process towards the completion of the first global integrated marine assessment by 2014.

(4) The Ad Hoc Working Group of the Whole recommends that the General Assembly recognize the work of the Group of Experts of the Regular Process during the second phase of the first assessment cycle and urge regional groups that have not yet done so to appoint experts to the Group of Experts in accordance with paragraph 180 of Assembly resolution 64/71.

(5) The Ad Hoc Working Group of the Whole recommends that the General Assembly recognize the work of the individual members of the pool of experts involved in the preparation of the first global integrated marine assessment.

(6) The Ad Hoc Working Group of the Whole recommends that the General Assembly express its appreciation for the eight workshops held in support of the Regular Process, as identified in the guidelines for workshops (see A/66/189, annex II).

(7) The Ad Hoc Working Group of the Whole recommends that the General Assembly welcome the technical workshops on capacity-building for integrated assessments held in Bangkok and Maputo in 2012 and in Abidjan and Freetown in 2013.

(8) The Ad Hoc Working Group of the Whole recommends that the General Assembly take note of the summaries of the workshops held in Grand Bassam, Côte d'Ivoire, from 28 to 30 October 2013 and in Chennai, India, from 27 to 29 January 2014 (see A/68/766 and A/68/812, respectively).

(9) The Ad Hoc Working Group of the Whole recommends that the General Assembly take note with appreciation of the technical and logistical support provided by the United Nations Environment Programme and the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission to the Regular Process and of their support, and the support of other organizations, for the workshops of the Regular Process and to the technical workshops on capacity-building for the conduct of integrated assessments.

(10) The Ad Hoc Working Group of the Whole recommends that the General Assembly note with appreciation the contributions made to the voluntary trust fund for the purpose of supporting the operations of the Regular Process, express its serious concern regarding the limited resources available in the trust fund, and urge Member States, international financial institutions, donor agencies, intergovernmental organizations, non-governmental organizations and natural and juridical persons to make financial contributions to the funds established pursuant to paragraph 183 of General Assembly resolution 64/71 of 4 December 2009 and to make other contributions to the Regular Process.

(11) The Ad Hoc Working Group of the Whole recommends that the General Assembly recall its decision to review the need for sustainability in the activities of the Regular Process and to continue its consideration of the need to ensure predictability and sustainability of financial resources to support the operations of the Regular Process.

(12) The Ad Hoc Working Group of the Whole recommends that the General Assembly recognize the support provided by the Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea as the secretariat of the Regular Process, while also recognizing its already significant resource constraints.

(13) The Ad Hoc Working Group of the Whole recommends that its next meeting be convened in the first half of 2015.

B. Guidance for the Group of Experts and the secretariat of the Regular Process concerning the preparation of the first global integrated marine assessment

14. The Ad Hoc Working Group of the Whole decides on the following guidance for the Group of Experts and the secretariat of the Regular Process concerning the preparation of the first global integrated marine assessment.

(1) The Ad Hoc Working Group of the Whole requests the Group of Experts to conduct any necessary consultations that still need to be made with the relevant international bodies and forums for the Arctic and Antarctic.

(2) The Ad Hoc Working Group of the Whole requests the Group of Experts to identify gaps in the areas of expertise in the pool of experts and further requests the secretariat of the Regular Process, in consultation with the

Bureau, to send invitations to Member States to appoint experts to address any such gaps.

(3) The Ad Hoc Working Group of the Whole urges the Group of Experts to finalize the designation and assignment of experts to the chapters of the first global integrated marine assessment of the Regular Process as soon as possible, for approval by the Bureau, to enable the Group of Experts to finalize its work in the preparation of the assessment.

(4) The Ad Hoc Working Group of the Whole further urges the Group of Experts to propose the arrangements for the selection of the panel of peer reviewers from the members of the pool of experts of the Regular Process, for approval by the Bureau, taking into account the need to ensure that the members of the panel of peer reviewers were not previously involved in the preparation of the working papers or chapters which they are asked to review.

(5) The Ad Hoc Working Group of the Whole requests the secretariat of the Regular Process to send the draft of the first global integrated marine assessment to Member States and peer reviewers for their review in two instalments, namely, the initial draft chapters at the end of June 2014 and the entire draft, including updated initial draft chapters, at the end of August 2014. The Ad Hoc Working Group of the Whole considers that, under this arrangement, Member States will have the opportunity to submit comments on the initial draft chapters in July, should they decide to do so, and to otherwise complete their review of the draft chapters by the end of October 2014.

(6) The Ad Hoc Working Group of the Whole requests the Group of Experts to revise the first global integrated marine assessment in the light of the comments received from the panel of peer reviewers and Member States by the end of October 2014, and to present the revised draft, together with the comments received, to the Bureau for approval by the Bureau and transmission to the Ad Hoc Working Group of the Whole for its consideration.

(7) The Ad Hoc Working Group of the Whole decides that the Group of Experts, in consultation with the Bureau and the secretariat of the Regular Process, should consider ways to improve coordination with other agencies and bodies conducting assessments that involve the oceans, including through the sharing of information and data on assessments.

Annex I

Agenda of the fifth meeting of the Ad Hoc Working Group of the Whole on the Regular Process for Global Reporting and Assessment of the State of the Marine Environment, including Socioeconomic Aspects

1. Opening of the meeting.
2. Adoption of the agenda.
3. Organization of work.
4. Report of the Bureau of the Ad Hoc Working Group of the Whole.
5. Preparation of the first global integrated marine assessment of the Regular Process.
6. Summary of the first global integrated marine assessment.
7. Resources needed to support the Regular Process, including the status of the Regular Process trust fund.
8. Workshops in support of the first cycle of the Regular Process.
9. Adoption of recommendations to the sixty-ninth session of the General Assembly.
10. Other matters.
11. Closure of the meeting.

Annex II

Outline[a] for the First Global Integrated[b] Marine Assessment of the Regular Process for Global Reporting and Assessment of the State of the Marine Environment, including Socioeconomic Aspects[c]

Part I
Summary

This part would not follow the pattern of the main report, but highlight the most significant conclusions. It would aim to bring out:

(a) *The way in which the assessment has been carried out;*

(b) *Overall assessment of the scale of human impact on the oceans and the overall value of the oceans to humans;*

(c) *The main threats to the marine environment and human economic and social well-being;*

(d) *The needs for capacity-building and effective approaches to meeting such needs; and*

(e) *The most serious gaps in knowledge and possible ways of filling them.*

Part II
The context of the assessment

Chapter 1
Planet: oceans and life

This chapter would be a broad, introductory survey of the role played by the oceans and seas in the life of the planet, the way in which they function, and humans' relationships to them.

Chapter 2
Mandate, information sources and method of work

2.A. Objectives, scope and mandate of the Regular Process, as agreed by the General Assembly.

2.B. Explanation of the rationale for the Regular Process, and the need to ensure regular assessments of the marine environment, including socioeconomic aspects

---

[a] The present annex contains the outline as adopted by the Ad Hoc Working Group of the Whole at its third meeting (23-27 April 2012), with the chapters numbered sequentially. Part VI was further fine-tuned by the Group of Experts and accepted by the Bureau. The Working Group took note of the updated outline on 31 March 2014.

[b] In this context, "integrated" means assessing impacts from a number of individual stressors and considering cumulative effects on marine ecosystems, i.e., the overall impact from multiple processes and activities overlapping in time and space.

[c] The first global integrated marine assessment will not include any analysis of policies.

(including an explanation of what is new in the first global integrated marine assessment).

2.C. General issues relating to the collection of environmental, economic and social data relating to the oceans and seas and human uses of them, including national, regional and global aggregation and analysis of information and data, quality assurance of data and access to information.

2.D. Description of the procedures agreed for carrying out the first global integrated marine assessment, and the way in which these procedures have been implemented, including the approach to the science/policy interface, the selection of contributors, the choices made on the establishment of baselines, the description and categorizing of uncertainties and the quality assurance of data.

Part III
Assessment of major ecosystem services from the marine environment (other than provisioning services)[d]

Several chapters in this part would draw heavily on the work of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. The aim would be to use the work of the Panel, as well as the framework of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, not to duplicate it or challenge it.

Chapter 3
Scientific understanding of ecosystem services

Overview of the state of scientific understanding of ecosystem services, including data collection, information management, differences between different parts of the world and research needs.

Chapter 4
The oceans' role in the hydrological cycle

4.A. The interactions between the seawater and freshwater segments of the hydrological cycle: the rate of turnover and changes in it — freshwater fluxes into the sea and their interaction with it, including the effects on the marine environment of changes in those fluxes as a result of changes in continental ice sheets and glaciers, and of anthropogenic changes in those fluxes (for example, from dam-building or increased abstraction) — reduction in ice coverage — sea-level changes.

4.B. Environmental, economic and social implications of ocean warming, sea-level change, including the implications of rises in sea level for security and implications for low-lying countries, and anthropogenic and other changes to freshwater fluxes into the sea.

4.C. Chemical composition of seawater: salinity and nutrient content of the different water bodies — changes in salinity and nutrient content.

---

[d] The main provisioning service from the oceans is food, which is covered in part IV (Assessment of cross-cutting issue: food security and food safety). Other provisioning services are covered in part V (Assessment of other human activities and the marine environment).

4.D. Environmental, economic and social implications of changes in salinity and nutrient content.

4.E. The oceans' role in heat transportation: ocean warming — the overall influence of the oceans on surface temperature and circulation patterns — oceanic oscillations — El Niño and similar events.

4.F. Environmental, economic and social impacts of changes in ocean temperature and of major ocean temperature events.

Chapter 5
Sea/air interaction

5.A. The role of the seas in regulating atmospheric fluxes and concentration of oxygen and carbon dioxide (oxygen production, carbon dioxide sequestration): role of the oceans and seas as carbon dioxide sinks — issues about maintaining or enhancing that role.

5.B. Scale and significance of the coal industries.

5.C. Meteorological phenomena related to the oceans: hurricanes and typhoons — monsoon rains — trade winds.

5.D. Environmental, economic and social implications of trends in meteorological phenomena, including changes in the frequency and intensity of storms, effects on seas covered by ice for much of the year and the communities that depend on them, and the implications for small island developing States.

5.E. Ocean acidification: degree and extent of ocean acidification resulting from human activities (including coral bleaching).

5.F. Environmental, economic and social implications of trends in ocean acidification (with cross-reference to part IV on assessment of cross-cutting issue: food security and food safety).

Chapter 6
Primary production, cycling of nutrients, surface layer and plankton

6.A. Global distribution of primary production: the reasons for the present distribution — factors affecting cycling of nutrients and the variability and resilience of the base of the food web — changes known and foreseen, including changes in ultraviolet radiation from ozone-layer problems.

6.B. Surface layer and plankton: role of the surface layer — factors influencing it — variations in plankton species.

6.C. Environmental, economic and social implications of trends in primary production and other factors affecting the inherent variability and resilience of the base of the food web (with cross-reference to part IV on assessment of cross-cutting issue: food security and food safety).

Chapter 7
Ocean-sourced carbonate production

Role of ocean-sourced carbonate production in the formation of atolls and beaches — potential impacts of ocean acidification.

Chapter 8
Aesthetic, cultural, religious and spiritual ecosystem services derived from the marine environment

Scale of human interactions with the oceans and seas on the aesthetic, cultural, religious and spiritual levels, including burials at sea, and ways in which these interactions may be affected by other changes. There would also be a cross-reference to chapter 27 (Tourism and recreation).

Chapter 9
Conclusions on major ecosystems services other than provisioning services

Summary of the main issues, including capacity-building needs and information gaps, as identified in chapters 3 to 8.

Part IV
Assessment of the cross-cutting issues: food security and food safety

This part would draw substantially on assessments carried out by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO). The aim would be to use the work of FAO, not to duplicate it or challenge it.

Chapter 10
Oceans and seas as sources of food

Scale of human dependence on the oceans and seas for food and pressures of increased demands, the variations between different parts of the world, and the extent to which some parts of the world depend on other parts for fish and seafood and the contribution of living marine resources to food security.

Chapter 11
Capture fisheries

11.A. Commercial fish and shellfish stocks: present status of fish and shellfish stocks that are commercially exploited and factors affecting them, including fishing practices — scale of economic activity (large-scale commercial, artisanal and recreational[c] fishing).

11.B. Other fish and shellfish stocks: present status of fish and shellfish stocks exploited by artisanal or subsistence fishing — significance for livelihoods — present status of fish stocks not currently exploited.

11.C. Impacts of capture fisheries (large-scale commercial, artisanal and subsistence fishing) on marine ecosystems, through effects on the food web, by-catch (fish, mammals, reptiles and seabirds), and different fishing gear and methods, including the impact of discards on other wildlife, and impacts from lost or abandoned fishing gear.

[c] See also chapter 27 (Tourism and recreation) on recreational fishing.

11.D. Effects of pollution on living marine resources: possible effects of chemical and radioactive pollution on stocks of living marine resources used for food — implications of potential threats of such pollution.

11.E. Illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing:[f] scale, location and impacts on fish stocks.

11.F. Significant environmental, economic and/or social aspects[g] in relation to capture fisheries.

11.G. Projections of the status of fish and shellfish stocks over the next decade in the light of all relevant factors.

11.H. Identify gaps in capacity to engage in capture fisheries and to assess the environmental, social and economic aspects of capture fisheries and the status and trends of living marine resources.

Chapter 12
Aquaculture

12.A. Scale and distribution of aquaculture: locations of aquaculture activities — species cultivated — economic significance and contribution to food security.

12.B. Aquaculture inputs and effects: demand for coastal space — demand for fish meal from capture fisheries.

12.C. Pollution and contamination from aquaculture: use of chemicals — interactions of escaped stock with wild stocks.

12.D. Significant environmental, economic and/or social aspects[g] in relation to aquaculture.

12.E. Projections of the role of aquaculture over the next decade in the light of all relevant factors.

12.F. Identify gaps in capacity to engage in aquaculture and to assess the environmental, social and economic aspects of aquaculture.

Chapter 13
Fish stock propagation

13.A. Rebuilding depleted stocks through marine ranching and release of fish from hatcheries.

13.B. Transplantation of living marine resources to different ecosystems.

13.C. Effects of artificial propagation on natural ecosystems.

13.D. Significant environmental, economic and/or social aspects[g] in relation to fish stock propagation.

13.E. Identify gaps in capacity to engage in fish stock propagation and to assess the environmental, social and economic aspects of fish stock propagation.

---

[f] As defined in the FAO International Plan of Action to Prevent, Deter and Eliminate Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing.

[g] The first global integrated marine assessment will not include any analysis of policies.

Chapter 14
Seaweeds and other sea-based food

14.A. Scale, location of collection and significance of food derived from the oceans and seas other than fish and shellfish — projected developments over the next decade.

14.B. Potential impacts of collection of seaweed and other sea-based food.

14.C. Significant environmental, economic and/or social aspects[g] in relation to the collection of seaweeds and other sea-based food.

14.D. Identify gaps in capacity to assess the environmental, social and economic aspects of seaweed and other sea-based food.

Chapter 15
Social and economic aspects of fisheries and sea-based food

15.A. Relationship with human health: health benefits and problems from sea-based food, including the potential to supplement protein-poor diets — chemical, toxic and bacterial contamination.

15.B. Scale and significance of employment in fisheries and aquaculture: numbers employed — relationship of earnings to local median earnings — scale of injuries to fishers compared to other industries.

15.C. Role of fisheries in social structure: role of fishers in local societies — extent to which fishing is the sole source of livelihood — extent to which local societies are dependent on fisheries and aquaculture.

15.D. Relationship between catch areas, ownership and operation of fishing vessels, landing ports and consumption distribution: the benefits which States (and economic operators based in them) obtain from fisheries and aquaculture.

15.E. Implementation of international fisheries agreements.

15.F. Effects of changes in markets: growth of long-distance transport of landed fish and shellfish.

15.G. Links to other industries: scale of economic activity dependent on fisheries and aquaculture, both in providing equipment (especially ships) and in processing output in value chains.

15.H. Identify gaps in capacity to engage in fisheries and to assess the environmental, social and economic aspects of fisheries.

Chapter 16
Conclusions on food security

16.A. Summary of the main issues, including capacity-building needs and information gaps, identified in chapters 10 to 15.

16.B. Longer-term development of food from marine resources — impacts of climate change in the context of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and based on the conclusions of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change — impacts of population changes — relation with changes in terrestrial food production.

Part V
Assessment of other human activities and the marine environment

Chapter 17
Shipping

17.A. Significance of shipping in world trade: major shipping routes — amount of world trade carried by sea — economic benefits to States from shipping activities, including as flag States — projections of changes over the next decade, including changes in shipping possibilities at high latitudes as a result of changes in ice cover.

17.B. Threats from shipping: locations, scale and trends — pollution from shipping (covering all forms of pollution regulated by annexes I to VI to the International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships, anti-fouling treatments and noise) — the acoustic impact of shipping on marine organisms — shipping disasters, including their longer-term effects — invasive species through ballast water and other biosecurity risks — transport of ships for ship-breaking — risks to coastal States from shipping compared to their trade.

17.C. Threats to the marine environment posed by the transport by sea of hazardous and noxious substances and of radioactive substances.

17.D. Links to other industries and commerce: ship-building — ship-breaking — bunkers — insurance, chartering and navigation services.

17.E. Significant environmental, economic and/or social aspects[g] in relation to shipping.

17.F. Identify gaps in capacity to engage in shipping and to assess the environmental, social and economic aspects of shipping, including implementation of international conventions and other instruments.

Chapter 18
Ports

18.A. Scale and significance of port activities: locations and traffic — projected growth, including the implications of changes in shipping routes considered under issue 17.A — economic benefits to port States.

18.B. Impacts of the creation and maintenance of ports: scale of port development — dredging for navigational purposes — management of ships' waste, including effects of charging regimes — pollution from ships in port — remobilization of pollutants by dredging.

18.C. Significant environmental, economic and/or social aspects[g] in relation to the construction and management of ports.

18.D. Identify gaps in capacity to assess the environmental, social and economic aspects of ports and monitoring their impact on the marine environment.

Chapter 19
Submarine cables and pipelines

19.A. Scale, location and role of cables and cable-laying: role in international communications and the Internet — projected developments over the next decade — employment — links to other industries — economic benefits.

19.B. Potential pollution and physical harm from cables and pipelines — during construction/installation — during use — after decommissioning.

19.C. Significant environmental, economic and/or social aspects[g] in relation to pipelines and cables and pipeline and cable-laying.

19.D. Identify gaps in capacity to engage in cable-laying and pipeline installation and to assess the environmental, social and economic aspects of cable-laying and pipeline installation.

Chapter 20
Coastal, riverine and atmospheric inputs from land

20.A. Municipal wastewater, including the impact of major cities and of cruise ships in harbours: scale and degree of treatment — nature of impact, both through direct and riverine inputs and including impacts on microbiological quality of coastal waters, as well as economic impacts of adverse effects on water quality, especially on aquaculture and tourism — projected developments over the next decade.

20.B. Industrial discharges, including point sources: hazardous substances, including persistent organic pollutants and heavy metals — hydrocarbons — nutrients — scale of discharges (direct and riverine inputs and atmospheric transport) — degree of treatment — nature of impact, including impacts on human health through food chain — projected developments over the next decade.

20.C. Agricultural run-off and emissions: scale (direct and riverine inputs and atmospheric transport of nutrients) — nature of impact — projected developments over the next decade.

20.D. Eutrophication: combined effects of municipal, industrial and agricultural inputs (including algal blooms), considering also the effects of turbidity in coastal waters and denitrification in estuaries — cross-reference to effects on fish stocks and effects on the food web.

20.E. Inputs of radioactive substances from both nuclear and non-nuclear industries — actual, potential and suspected impacts of inputs of radioactive substances.

20.F. Significant environmental, economic and/or social aspects[g] in relation to managing the impact of land-based inputs.

20.G. Identify gaps in capacity to assess the environmental, social and economic aspects related to coastal, riverine and atmospheric inputs from land.

20.H. Scale of desalinization and its environmental impacts. Identify gaps in capacity to engage in desalinization and to assess the environmental, social and economic aspects of desalinization.

Chapter 21
Offshore[h] hydrocarbon industries

21.A. Scale and significance of the offshore hydrocarbon industries and their social and economic benefits.

21.B. Impacts from exploration, including seismic surveys and exploitation and decommissioning.

21.C. Offshore installation disasters and their impacts, including longer-term effects.

21.D. Significant environmental, economic and/or social aspects[g] in relation to offshore hydrocarbon installations.

21.E. Identify gaps in capacity to engage in offshore hydrocarbon industries and to assess the environmental, social and economic aspects of offshore hydrocarbon industries.

Chapter 22
Other marine-based energy industries

22.A. Scale of wind, wave, ocean thermal and tidal power generation — current, planned and forecast.

22.B. Environmental benefits and impacts of wind, wave, ocean thermal and tidal power generation.

22.C. Expected economic performance of wind, wave, ocean thermal and tidal power generation.

22.D. Significant environmental, economic and/or social aspects[g] in relation to offshore wind, wave, ocean thermal and tidal power installations.

22.E. Identify gaps in capacity to engage in offshore wind, wave, ocean thermal and tidal power generation and to assess the environmental, social and economic aspects of offshore wind, wave, ocean thermal and tidal power generation.

Chapter 23
Offshore mining industries

23.A. Scale and significance of sand and gravel extraction: environmental impacts of sand and gravel extraction.

23.B. Economic benefits of sand and gravel extraction.

23.C. Developments in other seabed mining: current state and potential scale.

23.D. Significant environmental, economic and/or social aspects[g] in relation to offshore mining industries.

23.E. Identify gaps in capacity to engage in offshore mining and to assess the environmental, social and economic aspects of offshore mining.

---

[h] "Offshore" in this chapter and the following two chapters covers all installations that are situated in the marine environment, whether in internal waters or in maritime areas subject to the sovereignty or jurisdiction of States.

Chapter 24
Solid waste disposal

24.A. Types and amounts of waste dumped at sea, including explosives and hazardous liquids and gases, and potential impacts on the marine environment — projected levels of dumping over the next decade.

24.B. Significant environmental, economic and/or social aspects[g] in relation to solid-waste dumping at sea.

24.C. Identify gaps in capacity to engage in solid-waste disposal at sea and to assess the environmental, social and economic aspects of solid-waste disposal at sea.

Chapter 25
Marine debris

25.A. The multiple causes of marine debris, including lack of controls on land-based disposal of waste, lack of management of beach litter and ship-generated litter, and the scale and distribution of the problem.

25.B. Approaches to combating marine debris — range of application — cases where progress has been made.

25.C. Identify gaps in capacity to control marine debris and to assess the environmental, social and economic aspects of marine debris.

Chapter 26
Land/sea physical interaction

26.A. Land reclamation: scale and location of land reclamation and habitat modification and the habitats affected — significant environmental, economic and/or social aspects[g] in relation to land reclamation and habitat modification.

26.B. Erosion of land by the sea: economic and social costs of land erosion — effects on marine and coastal habitats of coastal defences, including beaches and fringing islands — implications for small island developing States — costs of coastal defences — significant environmental, economic and/or social aspects[g] in relation to erosion of land by the sea.

26.C. Sedimentation changes: sedimentation in the marine environment as a result of land erosion by rainfall and rivers — decline in marine sedimentation as a result of water management — effect of both types of change on marine and coastal habitats, including estuaries, deltas, submarine canyons — significant environmental, economic and/or social aspects[g] in relation to control of the causes of sedimentation change.

26.D. Identify gaps in capacity to assess land/sea physical interaction.

Chapter 27
Tourism and recreation

27.A. Location and scale of tourism and recreation, including cruise ships: employment — economic benefits of tourism — economic benefits resulting from protecting marine biodiversity.

27.B. Recreational and sport fishing and its impact on marine wildlife.

27.C. Impacts of recreational and tourist vessels on sensitive sea areas.

27.D. Contribution of tourism to problems of sewage and pollution, including from cruise ships (see also heading 20A (Municipal wastewater)).

27.E. Location and scale of other environmental impacts of tourism, including habitat disturbance and destruction.

27.F. Relationship of tourism to protection of marine species and habitats (for example, whale-watching and whale sanctuaries).

27.G. Significant environmental, economic and/or social aspects[g] in relation to managing the environmental impacts of tourism on the marine environment.

27.H. Identify gaps in capacity to assess the interface of tourism and the marine environment and the environmental, social and economic aspects of tourism.

Chapter 28
Desalinization

Scale of desalinization and its social and economic benefits. Identify gaps in capacity to engage in desalinization and to assess the environmental, social and economic aspects of desalinization.

Chapter 29
Use of marine genetic resources

29.A. Current topics, locations and scale of marine scientific research and exploitation, including the uses being made of marine genetic resources and associated issues such as intellectual property rights and impacts.

29.B. Significant environmental, economic and/or social aspects[g] of marine scientific research relating to, and exploitation of, marine genetic resources.

29.C. Identify gaps in capacity to engage in marine scientific research relating to, and exploitation of, marine genetic resources and to assess the environmental, social and economic aspects of them.

Chapter 30
Marine scientific research

30.A. Topics, scale and location of marine scientific research.

30.B. Significant environmental, economic and/or social aspects[g] in relation to marine scientific research.

30.C. Identify gaps in capacity to engage in marine scientific research and to assess the environmental, social and economic aspects of marine scientific research, including transfer of technology.

Chapter 31
Conclusions on other human activities

Summary of the linkages between driving forces related to human activities and the state of the marine environment, having regard to the various types of pressure.

Chapter 32
Capacity-building in relation to human activities affecting the marine environment

General conclusions on the identification of gaps in capacity to engage in the human activities described above and to assess the environmental, social and economic aspects of human activities affecting the marine environment.

Part VI
Assessment of marine biological diversity and habitats

Chapter 33
Introduction

The aim of this part is (a) to give an overview of marine biological diversity and what is known about it; (b) to review the status and trends of, and threats to, marine ecosystems, species and habitats that have been scientifically identified as threatened, declining or otherwise in need of special attention or protection; (c) to review the significant environmental, economic and/or social aspects[g] in relation to the conservation of marine species and habitats; and (d) to identify gaps in capacity to identify marine species and habitats that are identified as threatened, declining or otherwise in need of special attention or protection and to assess the environmental, social and economic aspects of the conservation of marine species and habitats.

Section A — Overview of marine biological diversity

Chapter 34
Scale of marine biological diversity

Main gradients of diversity for species, communities and habitats (coastal to abyssal, equatorial to polar, substrate type, salinity).

Chapter 35
Extent of assessment of marine biological diversity

Proportion of major groups of species and habitats in the different marine regions that are assessed on a systematic basis for status, trends and threats.

Chapter 36
Overall status of major groups of species and habitats

Summary by major group and marine region, of the status, trends and threats, including the cumulative effects of pressures, shown by those assessments.

Division 36.A. North Atlantic

Division 36.B. South Atlantic

Division 36.C. North Pacific

Division 36.D. South Pacific

Division 36.E. Indian Ocean

Division 36.F. Open-ocean deep sea

Division 36.G. Arctic Ocean

Division 36.H. Southern Ocean

Each of these divisions will be structured on the following pattern:

1. *Introductory paragraph on the region — scale of shelf, deep sea, island, etc., and human populations, economies and livelihoods associated with the sea*

2. *Coastal area*

(a) *Status and trends of biodiversity*

(i) *Fish (including pelagic macroinvertebrates like squid, shrimp, etc.)*

(ii) *Benthic communities*

(iii) *Zooplankton communities*

(iv) *Primary producers — phytoplankton and macroalgae*

(v) *Other biota with important trends — any marine mammals, seabirds or marine reptiles species with particularly important trends*

(b) *Major pressures in the coastal area and major groups impacted by the pressures*

(c) *Major ecosystem services being impacted by the pressures*

(i) *Services to ecosystem being lost*

(ii) *Services to humans being lost*

3. *Shelf or boundary-current area (to be structured in the same way as the coastal area)*

4. *Treatment of any special areas — semi-enclosed seas, etc.*

5. *Special conservation status issues*

(a) *For taxonomic groups*

(b) *For major types of habitats*

6. *Factors for sustainability*

Section B — Marine ecosystems, species and habitats scientifically identified as threatened, declining or otherwise in need of special attention or protection

This section will include marine ecosystems, processes, species and habitats requiring special attention and will be structured in the light of the overview in section A.

I. Marine species

Chapter 37
Marine mammals

Chapter 38
Seabirds

Chapter 39
Marine reptiles

Chapter 40
Sharks (and other elasmobranchs)

Chapter 41
Tuna and billfish

II. Marine ecosystems and habitats

Chapter 42
Cold-water corals

Chapter 43
Warm-water corals

Chapter 44
Estuaries and deltas

Chapter 45
Open-ocean deep-sea biomass

Chapter 46
Hydrothermal vents and cold seeps

Chapter 47
High-latitude ice

Chapter 48
Kelp forests and sea grass

Chapter 49
Mangroves

Chapter 50
Salt marshes

Chapter 51
The Sargasso Sea

Chapter 52
Seamounts and other submarine geological features potentially threatened by disturbance

Section C — Environmental, economic and/or social aspects of the conservation of marine species and habitats and capacity-building needs

Chapter 53
Significant environmental, economic and/or social aspects in relation to the conservation of marine species and habitats

Chapter 54
Capacity-building needs

Identification of gaps in capacity to identify marine species and habitats that are identified as threatened, declining or otherwise in need of special attention or protection and to assess the environmental, social and economic aspects of the conservation of marine species and habitats.

Section D — Summary on marine biological diversity

Chapter 55
Summary on marine biological diversity

Summary of the main issues, including capacity-building needs and information gaps, identified in chapters 33 to 54.

Part VII
Overall assessment

Chapter 56
Overall assessment of human impact on the oceans

56.A. Consideration of the implications of cumulative pressures on the overall state of the oceans and seas.

56.B. Evaluations under different methods of assessing overall human impact on the oceans and seas.

Chapter 57
Overall value of the oceans to humans

Evaluations under different methods of the benefits accruing to humans from the oceans, including assessment of the costs of environmental degradation.

United Nations A/69/78

General Assembly

Distr.: General
25 April 2014

Original: English

Sixty-ninth session
Item 113 (c) of the preliminary list*
Elections to fill vacancies in subsidiary organs and other elections: election of fifteen members of the Human Rights Council

Letter dated 27 December 2013 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Paraguay to the United Nations addressed to the President of the General Assembly

I have the honour to address you regarding the candidature of the Republic of Paraguay for membership in the Human Rights Council for the term 2015-2017, at the elections to be held in 2014.

In accordance with General Assembly resolution 60/251 of 15 March 2006, please find attached a statement of the pledges and voluntary commitments of the Republic of Paraguay (see annex).

It would be highly appreciated if the present letter and its annex were circulated as a document of the General Assembly.

(*Signed*) Marcelo **Scappini**
Chargé d'affaires a.i.

* A/69/50.

14-31315 (E) 060514 060514

Please recycle

Annex to the letter dated 27 December 2013 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of Paraguay to the United Nations addressed to the President of the General Assembly

[Original: Spanish]

Candidature of Paraguay to the United Nations Human Rights Council for the 2015-2017 period

Voluntary pledges and commitments pursuant to General Assembly resolution 60/251

1. Convinced that the protection and exercise of human rights is the foundation of an effective democracy, in particular when all vulnerable groups are included, the Government of Paraguay has continuously stepped up its efforts to institutionalize human rights in the country. Paraguay's candidature to the Human Rights Council for the 2015-2017 period is the outcome of this process.

2. The Republic of Paraguay was a member of the United Nations Commission on Human Rights during the 2003-2005 period. In this connection, convinced that it would contribute to the Human Rights Council in a constructive and inclusive manner, for the first time in the country's history, the Government of Paraguay is seeking membership of the Council, for the 2015-2017 period.

3. Paraguay is a State party to the major regional and international instruments on the protection of human rights.[1] The Government therefore recognizes the competence of and cooperates with the various treaty monitoring bodies; it regularly submits reports to them concerning the human rights situation in the country and follows up on their recommendations. Indeed, Paraguay has honoured all of its commitments to the treaty bodies.

4. Since the advent of democracy in 1989, Paraguay's participation in and collaboration with the inter-American system bodies — the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights and the Inter-American Court of Human Rights — has been harmonious and productive, which has led to important progress towards fulfilment of the commitments undertaken by the State as a party to the American Convention on Human Rights (Pact of San José, Costa Rica). Paraguay has also actively supported the process of strengthening the inter-American human rights system.

[1] The International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination; the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights; the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the Optional Protocols thereto; the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the Optional Protocol thereto; the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment and the Optional Protocol thereto; the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Optional Protocols thereto; the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Their Families; the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the Optional Protocol thereto; the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance; the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide; the International Convention on the Suppression and Punishment of the Crime of Apartheid; the Convention on the Non-Applicability of Statutory Limitations to War Crimes and Crimes against Humanity.

5. Another priority of the Government has been to integrate a significant number of ratified instruments and international laws into the national legal order. In this connection, it has repealed several laws that run contrary to international human rights law and promoted legislative reforms with a view to achieving full harmonization.

6. Paraguay's commitment to human rights is also evident in its cooperation with the special procedures mandate holders. Since 2003, the Government has extended an open invitation to the special procedures mandate holders of the Human Rights Council, arranged a number of visits and developed an ongoing relationship with those mechanisms.

7. Paraguay is also committed to strengthening the universal periodic review mechanism. In addition to promoting a broad-based and participatory preparatory process within the country, the Government has accepted all of the recommendations that it received during the first cycle and has developed a follow-up system in order to identify challenges and thus improve the standards for protection of human rights.

8. A significant number of ministries and State institutions, as well as non-governmental entities, have a department, office or unit dedicated to human rights issues; this facilitates coordination among the various institutions to ensure that human rights are institutionalized and that public policy meets high standards for the protection of human rights. An example of such coordination is the establishment of the Human Rights Network of the Executive Branch and the drafting of the first national human rights plan, approved in 2013, which sets out a series of short-, medium- and long-term commitments that serve as the road map for the promotion and protection of human rights.

9. At the judicial level, for its part, the Supreme Court of Justice, in the framework of its commitment to promoting and defending human rights, has proposed to mainstream human rights concerns into all of its administration of justice activities. This commitment is expressed through concrete measures, such as the creation of the Museum of Justice and the Human Rights Records and Archives Centre in 1993. The 2011-2015 strategic plan of the Supreme Court of Justice was structured around the use of human rights and gender perspectives as a strategic analysis tool that would guide the process of adopting human rights indicators on the right to a fair trial. The plan also reiterates the Government of Paraguay's support for the 100 Brasilia Regulations Regarding Access to Justice for Vulnerable People.

10. The Government of Paraguay considers the goal of poverty reduction to be a national priority and is firmly committed to effectively addressing the issue of extreme poverty. In this regard, it is implementing the national poverty reduction programme, called "Sowing Opportunities", which aims to increase the income of families living in extreme poverty and enhance their access to social services.

11. Public policies on quality of life and equitable health care have been advanced with a view to improving people's quality of life by reducing and eliminating health inequities in line with the principles of universality, equality, comprehensiveness and social participation. The policies are implemented by family health units, which provide primary health care services and have reached a significant number of people in all regions of the country.

12. Paraguay promotes the protection of civil and political rights, in particular basic rights such as the right to life, the right to physical integrity and the right to liberty. Clear examples of Paraguay's dedication in this area include the human rights training course based on international standards offered to members of the national police; the strengthening of investigative mechanisms of the specialized human rights units of the Public Prosecution Service; and the establishment of the national mechanism on the prevention of torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.

13. Regarding efforts to counter human trafficking, Paraguay has an Inter-institutional Committee on Measures to Prevent and Counter Trafficking in Persons, made up of State institutions and civil society organizations; there is also a national policy to prevent and counter human trafficking, in addition to the Comprehensive Act against Human Trafficking of Paraguay, promulgated on 13 December 2012.

14. With respect to the protection of children and adolescents, the Government of Paraguay is investing heavily in strengthening the National System for the Protection and Comprehensive Promotion of the Rights of Children in order to achieve better and more effective coordination among its member entities. Furthermore, the Government is strengthening successful programmes on the protection and promotion of children's rights, such as the Abrazo Programme and the Assistance Programme for Street Children and Adolescents (PAINAC).

15. **With a view to contributing its vision to the human rights promotion and protection mechanisms of the Human Rights Council, Paraguay commits to the following:**

At the national level:

- Promote the implementation of the national human rights plan, with the participation of civil society, academia, and other relevant stakeholders;
- Strengthen and ensure the proper functioning of and coordination among the existing human rights mechanisms: the Human Rights Network of the Executive Branch, the commission responsible for carrying out international recommendations and rulings, and the national mechanism for the prevention of torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment; in addition, facilitate meetings with civil society in order to develop opportunities for dialogue and the exchange of experiences in the promotion and protection of human rights;
- Continue efforts to draft human rights indicators, to be added to existing indicators on health, education and the right to a fair trial;
- Promote the effective implementation of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and the Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention (Convention No. 169) of the International Labour Organization (ILO);
- Strengthen public policies that have a bearing on vulnerable groups: indigenous peoples, women, children and adolescents, trafficking victims, persons with disabilities, migrants and older persons, among others;

– Promote actions to fight impunity and support remembrance, truth and justice, in line with the recommendations contained in the report of the Truth and Justice Commission of 2008; also strengthen the existing mechanisms on reparations, such as the national team that investigates, searches for and fully identifies persons who were detained, disappeared or were victims of extra judicial executions during the 1954-1989 period, and the Inter-institutional Commission for the Establishment and Operation of the Network of Sites of History and Conscience;

At the regional level:

– Continue to support the work of the inter-American system bodies: the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights and the Inter-American Court of Human Rights;

– Promote the implementation of the recommendations, friendly settlement agreements and rulings of the human rights protection bodies of the inter-American human rights system;

– Actively support the discussions on strengthening the inter-American human rights system;

– Promote new discussions on human rights issues at regional forums;

– Enhance cooperation and technical assistance among countries in the region in order to strengthen human rights-related actions;

At the international level:

– Foster the concept that human rights are universal, indivisible, inalienable, interdependent and mutually reinforcing;

– Promote universal accession to the major human rights treaties;

– Cooperate fully with the activities of the Human Rights Council, its bodies, procedures and special mechanisms on the promotion and protection human rights;

– Support the strengthening of international cooperation as a tool that facilitates the effective implementation of human rights;

– Protect the independence of the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights;

– Promote the strengthening of the universal periodic review mechanism;

– Submit a midterm follow-up report on the recommendations resulting from the universal periodic review and a national report, within the allotted time period;

– At the national level, implement an effective mechanism to monitor and oversee international recommendations and share experiences with interested States;

– Encourage openness and honest dialogue with the special mechanisms and procedures of the United Nations Human Rights Council and maintain an open and continuous invitation for them to visit the country.

United Nations A/69/79–E/2014/66

General Assembly
Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
29 April 2014

Original: English

General Assembly
Sixty-ninth session
Item 19 of the preliminary list*
Sustainable development

Economic and Social Council
2014 session
Item 9 of the provisional agenda**
Implementation of and follow-up to major United Nations conferences and summits

Mainstreaming of the three dimensions of sustainable development throughout the United Nations system

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report provides a review of progress achieved by the United Nations system in mainstreaming the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development in its work. The second report on the topic, it is submitted pursuant to the mandates of the General Assembly and the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, from 20 to 22 June 2012. Particular attention is given in the report to processes and tools that could boost the mainstreaming of economic, social and environmental dimensions in the work of the United Nations system. It points to the creation of the high-level political forum on sustainable development as an important development and analyses whether sustainable development approaches are guiding the strategic plans of funds, programmes and specialized agencies, as well as their operational activities for development in developing countries. The report highlights that recent developments in quality assurance and safeguard mechanisms have given a boost to the mainstreaming of sustainable development. Special consideration is also given to the role of inspections and evaluations in driving sustainable development approaches in the United Nations system.

* A/69/50.
** E/2014/1/Rev.1, annex II.

14-31603 (E) 220514

Please recycle

I. Introduction

1. At the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, from 20 to 22 June 2012, world leaders renewed their commitment to sustainable development and to promoting sustainable development for present and future generations. They outlined a broad vision that places poverty eradication as the greatest global challenge facing the world today and as an indispensable requirement for the attainment of sustainable development.

2. In the outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, entitled "The future we want", Member States agreed that the United Nations system, including international financial institutions, should support the efforts of all countries, in particular developing countries, in the achievement of sustainable development (resolution 66/288, para. 91).

3. In order to fulfil the renewed commitments, world leaders recognized that the United Nations system needed to approach its own work from a sustainable development perspective. They therefore called on the programmes, funds and specialized agencies to mainstream the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development throughout the work of the United Nations system. In accordance with the request contained in paragraph 93 of the resolution, in 2013, the Secretary-General reported to the General Assembly, through the Economic and Social Council, on the progress made in that regard (A/68/79-E/2013/69). The report provided reflections on the conceptual framework for mainstreaming sustainable development in the work of the United Nations system and identified achievements and challenges. It also pointed out that progress in that regard would enhance the capacity of the United Nations system to support Member States in taking forward the post-2015 development agenda and the sustainable development goals.

4. In his report, the Secretary-General also identified important conditions for mainstreaming economic, social and environmental dimensions in the work of the United Nations system, including commitment at the highest level bolstered by clear and coherent intergovernmental guidance, and stronger coordination and policy coherence. Also critical were adequate institutional support, analytical capacity-building, and mobilization and allocation of resources to drive sustainable development.

5. As requested by the General Assembly in resolution 68/210, the present report provides an update on developments related to the mainstreaming of economic, social and environmental dimensions in the work of the United Nations system since 2013 (section II). It addresses institutional reform and the creation of the high-level political forum on sustainable development, which are expected to lead to coherent intergovernmental guidance in that area (section III), and looks at the role of inter-agency coordination mechanisms in mainstreaming the three dimensions of sustainable development (section IV). The report analyses the extent to which mainstreaming is reflected in the strategic plans of funds, programmes and specialized agencies, as well as in their operational activities for development in developing countries (section V). It reviews recent developments in quality assurance and safeguard mechanisms as a tool for mainstreaming the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development (section VI). Consideration is also given to the role of inspections and independent evaluations in

the United Nations system (section VII). Last, the report draws conclusions and provides a set of recommendations to further advance the integration of the three dimensions of sustainable development in the work of the United Nations system (section VIII).

II. United Nations system at work: an update

A. Translating sustainable development into the work of the United Nations system: practical implications

6. Sustainable development is not a new concept. Since the convening of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development 22 years ago, sustainable development has become the overarching framework for the work of the United Nations system.[1] However, systematically translating that vision into practice is still proving arduous, and the way the United Nations system works does not routinely reflect the interlinkages between the economic, social and environmental dimensions. Organizations must work together to provide integrated support to help countries to pursue nationally owned sustainable development results.

7. In attempting to define in his previous report (A/68/79-E/2013/69) what "mainstreaming the three dimensions of sustainable development" means, the Secretary-General indicated that:

> Not all United Nations system policies and programmes have all three dimensions; however, it is important that the potential economic, social and environmental implications of policies and programmes be carefully considered. This is essential in order to avoid unintended impacts, conflicting policies or unsustainable outcomes. It also enables the United Nations system to identify synergies and possible triple-win opportunities.

8. Mainstreaming sustainable development requires, first, the adoption by individual organizations of strategies, programmes and projects that include simultaneously all three dimensions and take account of their interrelations and, second, stronger collaboration among various United Nations organizations, notably those in the economic, social and environmental areas, in order to ensure consideration of all three dimensions when providing support to countries.

B. Post-2015 development agenda as a driving force

9. The post-2015 development agenda and the sustainable development goals will have major implications for the way development is pursued at the national, regional and international levels. The United Nations system needs to ensure that it adapts to support the agenda. Success in that regard will depend in no small part on

[1] In the present report, the "United Nations system" is to be understood in its broader sense and hence includes funds, programmes, specialized agencies, departments of the United Nations Secretariat, other entities and international financial institutions that are independent specialized agencies of the United Nations system. The "United Nations development system" refers only to the 32 funds, programmes and specialized agencies that are members of the United Nations Development Group. It thus excludes the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund.

the ability of the system to mainstream the three dimensions of sustainable development in its work.

10. Not only must such integration be realized within each organization but coordination and cooperation must also be stepped up within the United Nations system as a whole. This is essential so that the system can provide integrated support to Member States, grounded in the unique expertise of all the funds, programmes and specialized agencies.

11. The need for integrated support and coordination derives from a characteristic of the post-2015 development agenda. While the focus on the Millennium Development Goals will remain, the agenda will also address economic and environmental issues because it will have poverty eradication and sustainable development at its core.

12. The post-2015 development agenda will be both universal and relevant to each country, taking into account their varying capacities and levels of development. A question that will need to be addressed is how the United Nations can bolster the implementation of such a universal development agenda. This may require taking a close look at some of its focus and activities. It will be important to make close linkages between the normative and operational roles of the United Nations. The new universal development agenda may also require frameworks for operational activities that are more inclusive and flexible.

13. Governments have been explicit in stating that the post-2015 development agenda should effect transformational change that is ambitious yet cognizant of intergenerational solidarity. Implementing such an agenda will require intellectual and analytical inputs from the United Nations system.

14. A transformative post-2015 development agenda must be supported by a renewed global partnership for development and be bolstered by multi-stakeholder partnerships. It is important therefore to deepen the engagement of the United Nations system with a breadth of development actors while also ensuring that accountability mechanisms conducive to engaging widely in such partnerships are in place.

C. Mainstreaming specific issues in the work of the United Nations system: what has been learned

15. In his previous report, the Secretary-General pointed out that the United Nations system had mainstreamed specific issues in its work in several areas, notably gender equality and women's empowerment, but also climate change, employment and decent work, and human rights (see box 1 below).

16. Based on the experiences of the United Nations system in that area, the following can be suggested as building blocks for mainstreaming the three dimensions of sustainable development in the work of the United Nations system:

(a) Strong, enabling intergovernmental mandates and guidance, with regular reporting by the Secretary-General;

(b) Systematic reflection of such mandates in the strategic plans of individual organizations;

(c) Development of a conceptual understanding of what mainstreaming economic, social and environmental dimensions means and entails;

(d) Engaging of the inter-agency machinery, namely the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB), through the expression of broad commitment and guidance and, as appropriate, the adoption of a system-wide plan or toolkits; the United Nations Development Group, to bolster mainstreaming at country level; and dedicated inter-agency groups;

(e) Clear methodology, guidance and tools on how to mainstream the three dimensions;

(f) Mobilization of United Nations country teams and system-wide capacity-building on how to use these tools;

(g) Strong system of accountability with adequate indicators and regular reporting.

17. More reflection is needed within the United Nations system and by Member States on which combination of the building blocks would be most conducive to mainstreaming economic, social and environmental dimensions in the work of the United Nations. It is important, for example, to consider whether a system-wide action plan or road map is needed. Section III examines recent progress related to intergovernmental guidance.

Box 1
Mainstreaming thematic issues in the work of the United Nations system

Gender

Efforts to strengthen gender mainstreaming have been undertaken in response to the series of United Nations conferences on women and gender equality. A United Nations system-wide policy on gender equality and the empowerment of women was endorsed by CEB in 2006. Two of the following three interconnecting and mutually reinforcing mechanisms have been developed as an accountability framework for implementation:

(a) United Nations country team performance indicators for gender equality and the empowerment of women were introduced in 2008;

(b) A system-wide action plan on corporate processes and institutional arrangements at the individual United Nations entity level was approved by CEB in 2012. Unified annual reporting for the action plan began in 2013 and the results will set a baseline for reporting to ensure the accountability of the United Nations system. Almost the entire United Nations system (62 entities, departments and offices) has, for the second time, reported back on a common set of performance indicators;

(c) The third mechanism — accountability for the contributions of the United Nations system to gender equality development results at the country and normative levels — is expected to be developed once the first two have taken root more firmly.

Accountability frameworks require heavy initial investments of time, resources and staff, suggesting the suitability of a phased approach in their development and implementation.

Consistent coordination by the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women), as a central hub responsive to the needs of the whole United Nations system, has been crucial to engaging stakeholders and supporting the effective communication and networking necessary to the success of the United Nations System-wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women.

The process has resulted in substantial advances in the performance of the United Nations system on gender mainstreaming. Gaps remain, however, and consistent and systematic efforts will be required to ensure that the United Nations system continues to progress, with a view to meeting the performance indicators set out in the Action Plan by 2017 (2019 for United Nations entities with a technical focus).

Employment and decent work

In the 2005 World Summit Outcome (resolution 60/1) and the ministerial declaration adopted at the high-level segment of the substantive session of 2006 of the Economic and Social Council (A/61/3/Rev.1, chap. III, para. 50), Member States decided to mainstream the goals of full and productive employment and decent work in policies, programmes and activities, with a view to achieving the internationally agreed development goals. In 2007, CEB endorsed the Toolkit for Mainstreaming Employment and Decent Work, and in 2009 a Global Jobs Pact was adopted to boost employment, production, investment and aggregate demand, and promote decent work for all. Most recently, the outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development put major emphasis on "promoting full and productive employment, decent work for all and social protection" (resolution 66/288, annex).

Promoting decent employment is essential to achieving food security and reducing poverty. In recognition of this linkage, in 2008 the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) was explicitly asked by the Economic and Social Council to mainstream the goals of full and productive employment and decent work for all in its policies, programmes and activities. In response, FAO prepared a guidance note to help FAO field offices integrate decent work in their programmes, and in 2012 it published *Decent Rural Employment for Food Security: A Case for Action*, which provided a conceptual analysis of the links between employment and the four dimensions of food security. The International Labour Organization and FAO are now developing guidance materials and tools for capacity development as well as an integrated country approach for promoting decent rural employment. Dedicated technical guidelines to mainstream the decent work aspect in the FAO country programming framework are part of the official country programming framework toolkit.

The FAO reviewed strategic framework for the period from 2010 to 2019, which was approved by the Conference of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations at its thirty-eighth session, gives increased importance to decent rural employment. Around 60 countries have already referred explicitly to employment priorities in framing their collaboration with FAO under their respective country programming frameworks.

III. Changing intergovernmental landscape

18. The first building block for integrating the three dimensions of sustainable development in the work of the United Nations system is intergovernmental guidance. There have been important developments in that regard. In September 2013, the high-level political forum on sustainable development met for the first time. Established at the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, the forum is expected to provide political leadership, guidance and recommendations for sustainable development, follow up and review progress in the implementation of sustainable development commitments, enhance the integration of the three dimensions of sustainable development in a holistic and cross-sectoral manner at all levels, ensuring the appropriate consideration of new and emerging sustainable development challenges (resolution 67/290, para. 2).

19. The guidance of the forum will thus greatly benefit the efforts of the United Nations system to develop a common vision and agenda for reform aimed at helping countries to adopt coherent strategies for sustainable development.

20. It will also be important for the United Nations system to support the deliberations of the nascent forum, be a partner in the implementation of decisions and report back on challenges and achievements. The forum will conduct regular reviews on the follow-up and implementation of sustainable development commitments as of 2016. These will include developed and developing countries but also reviews of relevant United Nations entities. If prepared and conducted effectively, the United Nations system reviews could provide important opportunities to discuss, for example, whether small groups of organizations are providing integrated support to Member States in a given area and whether individual organizations are mainstreaming economic, social and environmental dimensions in their work. The forum will need to decide on how it will conduct these reviews so that they lead to meaningful evaluations and findings. The peer reviews conducted in the context of the Environment Management Group, although focused on environmental sustainable management, could provide one example of how to conduct reviews.

21. At the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, Members States also decided to strengthen the role of the Economic and Social Council in coordinating the follow-up to the outcomes of major conferences and summits in the economic, social, environmental and related fields, and in promoting the balanced integration of the three dimensions of sustainable development (resolution 68/1). The strengthening of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the decision to make its governing body universal — with the establishment of the

United Nations Environment Assembly (pursuant to resolutions 66/288, 67/213 and 67/251) — is also expected to advance the mainstreaming of environmental dimensions within the United Nations system.

22. The coming year will be important in determining how to ensure complementarity and synergies among the various intergovernmental platforms as they deliver on their mandates.

23. The regional commissions have started to organize annual regional forums on sustainable development as a way to channel regional perspectives on sustainable development directly into the discussions of the high-level political forum on sustainable development, which are held in New York. The regional commissions have worked with the regional coordination mechanism they convene to help to shape regional positions on the sustainable development goals. This was done, for example, at the recent Arab high-level forum on sustainable development organized by the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA). The Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, will pilot the mainstreaming of sustainable development in its thirty-fifth session, to be held in 2014 in Lima.

IV. Role of inter-agency coordination mechanisms in mainstreaming the three dimensions of sustainable development

24. The engagement of inter-agency bodies is another building block for integrating the three dimensions in the work of the United Nations systems. Several United Nations system inter-agency mechanisms are presently focused on helping Member States to develop sustainable development goals.

25. The United Nations System Task Team on the Post-2015 United Nations Development Agenda has prepared 29 issues briefs for the stocktaking phase of the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals.

26. Theme- and sector-specific coordination mechanisms such as UN-Water and UN-Energy are likewise contributing to the elaboration of the post-2015 development agenda.

27. CEB and its subsidiary bodies are engaged in a reflection on how best the United Nations system can support Member States as they transition to a post-2015 development agenda centred on sustainable development. The High-level Committee on Programmes is assisting CEB in fostering an integrated response to the challenges and opportunities faced by the United Nations system as it defines its own contribution within a changed development policy environment. One of the challenges identified is the need for the coherent integration of policies across the three dimensions of sustainable development, within the context of the United Nations mandate of peace and security, development, human rights and the rule of law.

28. Both in the run-up to and following the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development held in 2012, the United Nations system has made significant advances in mainstreaming environmental dimensions in its work. The work of the Environment Management Group on the framework for advancing environmental and social sustainability in the United Nations system is of particular relevance.

29. The framework contains possible actions for strengthening the environmental and social sustainability of (i) strategies and policies; (ii) operational activities, by means of programmes and projects; and (iii) administrative decisions of the United Nations system, such as facilities management. In his 2013 report, the Secretary-General noted the importance of the framework as a possible point of departure for mainstreaming the three dimensions of sustainable development. In that context, however, the framework will need to be further elaborated to address the three dimensions of sustainable development and will need to be tested. United Nations system inter-agency bodies are currently discussing options for the follow-up of the framework by the United Nations system, and the Environment Management Group is continuing to develop guidance on the implementation of the framework.

30. In the view of some organizations, there is a need for greater clarity on how to mainstream social and economic dimensions in certain areas.

31. The High-level Task Force on the Global Food Security Crisis[2] provides an example of how various United Nations system organizations and other actors can join forces to address an issue from an economic, social and environmental perspective. The work of the High-level Task Force contributed to the alignment of humanitarian responses to the 2008 food price crisis. It also fed into subsequent longer term efforts within national Governments and regional organizations, as well as into specific initiatives of the Group of Eight and the Group of Twenty. Since 2012, the High-level Task Force has focused on providing support to countries, cities and communities that have embraced the Zero Hunger Challenge initiative, which was launched by the Secretary-General at the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development as the basis for a coherent approach to food and nutrition security that integrates all of the dimensions of sustainable development (see box 2 below).

32. A number of lessons can be learned from the approach of the High-level Task Force, for example: the important impact that results when United Nations agencies with different mandates coalesce around a common objective; and the importance of incorporating a partnerships approach to problem-solving, which enables organizations and social groups with very different compositions, mandates, needs, capacities and strengths to develop fully inclusive perspectives and solutions.

Box 2
Integrating the three dimensions of sustainable development in a specific area: the case of food security

In 2008, in response to the global food crisis, a number of funds, programmes and agencies of the United Nations system, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development and the World Trade Organization joined forces to develop a Comprehensive Framework for Action on food and nutrition security. The Comprehensive Framework for Action served as the basis for comprehensive, coherent, strategic and unified action across the United Nations system. The work of the High-level Task Force on the Global Food Security Crisis continues today.

[2] The High-level Task Force on the Global Food Security Crisis, established by the Secretary-General, brings together the heads of 23 United Nations system entities, including the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, the Chief Executive of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development and the World Trade Organization.

The Comprehensive Framework for Action was designed to be of use to Governments, international and regional organizations, and others with an interest in food security. It consisted of a range of policies and strategies that could be adapted to different settings and jointly implemented by multiple stakeholders to respond to the immediate needs of vulnerable populations and contribute to longer-term resilience.

In March 2012, in the run-up to the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, the High-level Task Force produced a common United Nations system-wide position entitled "Food and nutrition security for all through sustainable agriculture and food systems".

At the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, the Secretary-General launched the Zero Hunger Challenge, an invitation both to Governments and all other stakeholders to commit to actions that will bring an end to hunger. The holistic vision of the Zero Hunger Challenge fully integrates the three pillars of sustainable development in its five objectives, which are: ensuring 100 per cent access to adequate food all year round; eliminating stunting in children under the age of two; ensuring that food systems are sustainable; increasing smallholder productivity and income; and reducing food loss and waste.

In 2012, the High-level Task Force was reoriented to focus on providing support to countries, cities and communities that have embraced the Zero Hunger Challenge initiative.

33. The focus of the inter-agency machinery is currently on both supporting the elaboration of the post-2015 development agenda and on preparing the United Nations system for supporting implementation when the agenda is adopted. Further directions on mainstreaming the three dimensions of sustainable development in the work of the United Nations system may be expected as a result of that process.

V. Strategic orientations in the funds, programmes and specialized agencies, and in operational activities for development

A. Strategic plans and policies of the funds, programmes and specialized agencies

34. If sustainable development is to be the guiding framework for United Nations system organizations, it has to be established in the strategic plans of the organizations. This is clearly another building block for integrating the three dimensions in the work of the United Nations system. Regarding operational activities in particular, the strategic orientations of the funds, programmes and specialized agencies are guided by the 2012 quadrennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for the development of the United Nations system (resolution 67/226). In that review, the General Assembly reiterated the call of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development for United Nations

organizations to "further enhance the mainstreaming of sustainable development into their respective mandates, programmes, strategies and decision-making processes in support of the efforts of all countries, in particular developing countries, in the achievement of sustainable development" (resolution 67/226, para. 14).

35. Several United Nations funds and programmes, such as the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Children's Fund, the United Nations Population Fund, UNEP and the World Food Programme, have either adopted their strategic plans for the period 2014-2017 or are in the process of finalizing them. Other United Nations organizations, including the specialized agencies, are updating their existing policy frameworks and management plans to take into account the outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development and the quadrennial comprehensive policy review. A review of the draft strategic plans and policy papers of several organizations reveals notable progress as well as challenges in mainstreaming sustainable development in the strategic planning of the United Nations development system.

36. It needs to be acknowledged that not all organizations require major adjustments since their mandates and areas of work already integrate environmental, social and economic dimensions. Such is the case, for example, for FAO. In its reviewed strategic framework for the period 2010-2019, FAO developed a vision that mainstreams sustainable development in a balanced manner. It therefore undertakes to achieve a world free of hunger and malnutrition, where food and agriculture contribute to improving the living standards of all, especially the poorest, in an economically, socially and environmentally sustainable manner.

37. Similarly, the title of the United Nations Industrial Development Organization's medium-term programme framework 2010-2013 is "Industrial development for poverty reduction, inclusive globalization and environmental sustainability. The document calls on the organization to address three major global challenges, namely, poverty and inequality, uneven globalization, and environmental degradation and climate change. At the fifteenth session of the General Conference of the United Nations Industrial Development Organization, held in Lima in December 2013, its member States reinforced the link between the three dimensions of sustainable development outlined in the organization's mandate by adopting the Lima Declaration entitled "Towards inclusive and sustainable industrial development".

38. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization adopted an integrated approach contributing to sustainable development in its medium-term strategy for 2008-2013. Following the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development held in 2012, sustainable development was further highlighted as one of the two overarching objectives of the organization's new medium-term strategy for the period 2014-2021, with a view to enhancing its contribution to sustainable development in an even more holistic and cross-sectoral manner.

39. As the environmental pillar of the United Nations system, UNEP represents a special case. Its medium-term strategy for 2014-2017 continues the vision of the previous 2010-2013 strategy. The strategy is derived from the UNEP mandate to be the leading global environmental authority that sets the global environmental agenda, promotes the coherent implementation of the environmental dimension of sustainable development within the United Nations system and serves as an authoritative advocate for the global environment.

40. In other organizations, there is increasing awareness and recognition of the integrated nature of development and the interconnectedness of the related economic, social and environmental dimensions. For example, ESCWA has adopted inclusive and sustainable development as its overarching institutional objective in its 2014-2015 strategic framework. It has also adopted a framework to ensure that its 2016-2017 work programme addresses the integration of sustainable development at the design stage.

41. That awareness is not only seen in the strategic plans of entities with relatively broad mandates but also among entities with specialized mandates and unique expertise in clearly defined sectors. For example, the twelfth general programme of work of the World Health Organization reflects on future challenges and opportunities, including the global economic downturn, urbanization, demographic dynamics and environmental risks.

42. References in the strategic plans to sustainable development or to the outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development vary in terms of depth and context. In some cases, sustainable development and the outcome document are referred to as guiding visions. For example, the UNDP strategic plan for the period 2014-2017 acknowledges that the world is undergoing an unprecedented transition and that a rethink of the notion of development is required. Sustainable development is now defined as the central area of work, which reflects a more integrated vision in comparison to previous strategic plans, such as the one for the period 2008-2011. This is evidenced by the outcomes and outputs included in the integrated results and resources framework. The first outcome of UNDP strategic plan is that growth and development are inclusive and sustainable. Similarly, UNFPA emphasizes that the development of its strategic plan was shaped by, inter alia, the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development held in 2012.

43. Other draft strategic plans highlight in general terms the connection between their agency-specific mandates and sustainable development, emphasizing the importance of such areas of work in the post-Millennium Development Goal era. UNICEF states, for example, that healthy, safe and well-educated children are essential for a sustainable planet, and vice versa. Today's children and those of future generations must be nurtured so that they contribute to sustainable development. The World Tourism Organization's strategic white paper for 2014-2015 notes that the contribution of tourism to the global sustainable development agenda through the creation of conditions for competitive and sustainable tourism cuts across the three dimensions of sustainable development.

44. In some cases, although the wording "sustainable development" is not mentioned, the approach taken to address agency-specific mandates can be seen as a reflection of the concept of sustainable development. For example, the World Food Programme aims to deploy multidimensional interventions to address food insecurity and malnutrition, which are critically important to breaking the intergenerational cycle of hunger by facilitating the access of poor people to food, education and health services.

45. Overall, the approach taken and level of priority given to the mainstreaming of sustainable development vary significantly from one agency to another. Nevertheless, there are now many examples of strategic plans that take an integrated approach to ensuring that economic, social and environmental dimensions are

systematically mainstreamed in strategic plans, from objectives through to outcomes, outputs and indicators. Nevertheless, there is a need to further clarify how this can be done system-wide. For example, an important step would be to identify and report on joint outputs among several organizations.

B. United Nations system operational activities

46. Mainstreaming the three dimensions of sustainable development in the United Nations system also requires making changes at the country and programme levels. The United Nations Development Group is revising its guidelines on the development of United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks with a view to strengthening their sustainable development content. The effort is an important element in the mainstreaming of sustainable development in the policies, tools and guidance of the United Nations Development Group. It will occur in parallel with the development of case studies on strengthening normative and operational linkages within the United Nations.

47. The 2012 quadrennial comprehensive policy review recognized the achievements of a number of pilot programme countries in implementing, on a voluntary basis, the "Delivering as one" initiative. "Delivering as one" is an important initiative for enhancing the coherence, relevance, effectiveness and efficiency of the United Nations development system at country level (resolution 67/226, para. 134). Benefits from the "Delivering as one" initiative are expected, especially on cross-cutting issues and in the achievement of strategic results.

48. The United Nations Development Group believes that the "Delivering as one" initiative is a tool that can enhance coordination, facilitate access to the range of mandates and capacities of the United Nations system and leverage the comparative advantages of each agency. It can also allow agencies to better plan, manage and deliver on shared results. Although no specific reference is made to sustainable development, the initiative can be expected to be conducive to the mainstreaming of the three dimensions in the work of the United Nations system at the country and regional levels.

49. A survey conducted in 2013 among United Nations resident coordinators by the Department of Economic and Social Affairs revealed that 92 out of 109 countries fall into one of the following categories: a "Delivering as one" pilot country, a self-starter, a Government requesting to join the "Delivering as one" initiative or a Government actively considering joining the "Delivering as one" initiative.

50. A review of nine country-level planning initiatives that were started in 2013 and 2014 was conducted for the present report. The initiatives were either traditional United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks, "Delivering as one" programmes or United Nations Development Assistance Framework action plans.[3] Given the usual time needed to develop and finalize a United Nations Development Assistance Framework, it is reasonable to assume that most of the frameworks that came into effect in 2013 were already in an advanced form or ready for adoption at the time of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development held in 2012, making it impossible for them to refer to the mandates of the Conference on the mainstreaming of sustainable development. The outcome document of the

[3] Belize, Bhutan (draft), Guinea-Bissau, India, Lesotho, Liberia, Niger, Pakistan and Uganda.

Conference was not, therefore, mentioned in the documents reviewed. The Millennium Development Goals still constitute the main frame of reference for the United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks.

51. Nevertheless, some United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks still succeed in capturing the core concept of sustainable development by recognizing the multidimensional nature of development challenges and the importance of multisectoral intervention. For example, the United Nations Development Assistance Framework of India emphasizes that multidimensional problems require multidisciplinary approaches. Similarly, the United Nations Development Assistance Framework of Belize states that "development challenges, including systemic conundrums and fixable problems, can be found across sector, gender, geographic, ethnic, socioeconomic and lifecycle areas and contexts".

52. The concept of sustainability appears mostly, however, in the context of the environment. Nearly all the United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks and the "Delivering as one" programmes refer to "sustainable economic growth" or "environmental sustainability"; many state that environmental sustainability, which is one of the five programming principles of United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks, is applied in developing the frameworks and programmes. For example, at the outcome level, Liberia adopts sustainable natural resources utilization as a priority. Likewise, the United Nations Development Assistance Framework for Lesotho has a cluster on the environment, natural resources and climate change.

53. Overall, despite of the increased recognition of the need for an integrated approach and the importance of sustainability, a major shift in the way programming is done at the country level is not being observed. Similar to strategic planning at the Headquarters level, there seem to be varying levels of understanding about sustainable development and its implications for the strategic orientations and modus operandi of the United Nations system at the country level.

54. Nearly all United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks stress the United Nations value added in terms of its advisory and capacity-building role as a neutral partner. As a result, the United Nations is well positioned to advise Governments on sustainable development policies and institutions. This must be done by exploring and building on the synergy of various United Nations entities. Moreover, efforts already under way in that regard must be stepped up.

C. Challenges for the funds, programmes and specialized agencies

55. The vision embodied in the outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development challenges the United Nations development system to deepen system-wide coherence. This is rendered more difficult by the way the United Nations system is organized. Each of the funds, programmes, specialized agencies and other entities of the United Nations system are still primarily vertically accountable to their respective boards, governing bodies and committees. Some degree of horizontal system-wide accountability has been achieved for operational activities at the country level, notably through the "Delivering as one" process. Recent coordination among United Nations entities in the follow-up to the quadrennial comprehensive policy review through their strategic planning is also an important move in that direction. Greater determination and innovative approaches

will be needed in order for organizations to work better together and ensure that sustainable development and integrated approaches guide the work of the United Nations system as a whole.

56. Mainstreaming sustainable development also requires a flexible workforce that is able to address development challenges from all dimensions of sustainable development. Staff capacity assessments undertaken in several programme countries show growing demand from programme country Governments for specialized policy advisory support from the United Nations system to deal with emerging global challenges. Entities should be encouraged to develop inter-organizational cooperation projects and initiatives and flexible arrangements for pooling staff, and to establish common partnership strategies for acquiring human resources with the necessary expertise for both long- and short-term assignments, which are becoming increasingly intersectoral and interdisciplinary.

57. There is also a critical need to build the capacities and skills of United Nations system staff at the country level to help Governments in adopting policy approaches that integrate economic, social and environmental dimensions. Training and advisory services would be needed to equip Governments. These could be provided in the form of either internal arrangements for knowledge-sharing or external technical advice.

VI. Role of quality assurance and safeguard mechanisms in supporting the promotion of sustainable development

58. The adoption of quality assurance and safeguard mechanisms is an important way to advance the integration of economic, social and environmental dimensions in the United Nations system. Such mechanisms aim to avoid, mitigate or minimize the adverse social and environmental impacts of programmes and projects and to produce positive outcomes for people and the environment. The intention is to strengthen the institutional effectiveness of each United Nations entity with a view to helping it to deliver on existing mandates and achieve sustainable results. Consequently, while such mechanisms are not about defining strategic orientations or programmatic priorities related to sustainable development, they contribute to the achievement of results that are sustainable. Pioneering work has been carried out in that regard by the World Bank Group, the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and UNDP.

59. The World Bank Group and other multilateral development banks view safeguards as a mandatory framework for assessing the impact of their investment projects. Safeguards complement national policies and the World Bank also has environmental and social measures that apply to other forms of World Bank assistance. The objectives of safeguard policies are threefold: to inform decision-making; to integrate environmental and social considerations into project design; and to support public consultation and disclosure (see box 3).

Box 3
World Bank Group safeguard policies

The World Bank Group uses two policy frameworks: the safeguards framework of the World Bank, largely for the public sector; and the performance standards framework of the International Finance Corporation and the Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency for the private sector. The two policy frameworks share similar objectives in that the World Bank seeks to avoid, mitigate or minimize the adverse environmental and social impacts of projects, and to ensure that the projects are environmentally sound and sustainable.

The World Bank uses its convening ability, financial instruments and intellectual resources to embed its environmental and social commitment across all of its activities. The commitments range from global engagement in issues such as climate change and gender equality, to ensuring that environmental and social considerations underpin all of the World Bank's sector strategies, operational policies and country dialogue.

At the project level, the World Bank's global aspirations translate into the overarching principle that the organization will look beyond doing no harm to people and the environment to maximizing developmental opportunities for all, particularly the poor and the vulnerable, and safeguarding the well-being of all natural and living resources.

There are a range of safeguard policies ensuring that World Bank operations do not harm people or the environment. Key policies relate to, for example, carrying out environmental assessments, safeguarding natural habitats, engaging and protecting indigenous peoples, and avoiding and mitigating involuntary resettlement. The safeguard policies are currently being updated.

60. GEF recently developed minimum standards and safeguards based on those of the World Bank, with some changes, which have to be met by grantees in order to receive funding, with a view to ensuring that funds are used properly (see box 4 below). Among the core safeguard standards are the need to have environmental and social impact assessment systems in place, in addition to an accountability and grievance mechanism.

Box 4
Global Environment Facility policy on minimum environmental and social safeguards

A key GEF principle is that GEF-financed operations that achieve benefits in one area should not lead to adverse environmental or social impacts in other areas. Every effort should be made to avoid adverse impacts, and if avoidance is not feasible, they should be minimized, mitigated or offset. All implementers of GEF projects should also demonstrate sufficient dedication to sustainable development. Minimum requirements that serve as a key benchmark for the accreditation of GEF

project agencies include: conducting environmental and social impact assessments; protecting natural habitats; avoiding, minimizing or managing involuntary resettlement; and preventing adverse impacts on indigenous peoples. Other requirements relate to pest management, preserving physical cultural resources and ensuring the safety of dams.

Accountability measures and grievance systems should be designed to ensure the enforcement of policies and related systems, as well as receipt of and timely responses to complaints.

The GEF secretariat systematically assesses whether and how GEF agencies meet the relevant GEF standards and minimum requirements. GEF agencies should prove that they have sufficient implementation capacity to apply relevant policies, procedures, standards and guidelines to their projects or a clear track record of their implementation experience Of the nine GEF agencies, only one of the multilateral development banks meets all of the minimum requirements identified by GEF, while none of the five agencies of the United Nations system meets them all. All are in the process of implementing action plans to achieve compliance.

61. UNDP is also quite advanced in developing its own social and environmental standards and a related compliance review and dispute resolution process. Compliance with social and environmental standards are included as an indicator of organizational effectiveness in the integrated results and resources framework for the UNDP strategic plan for the period 2014-2017. The standards are also included as one of the seven quality criteria contained in the UNDP project-level quality assurance framework. The approach is intended to help the organization to strengthen organizational effectiveness and quality assurance to enhance the achievement of national development results (see box 5).

Box 5
United Nations Development Programme: social and environmental standards

The objectives of the draft UNDP social and environmental standards and associated accountability framework are to provide the policies, tools and systems needed to: strengthen the social and environmental outcomes of programmes and projects; avoid adverse impacts on people and the environment; minimize, mitigate and manage adverse impacts where avoidance is not possible; strengthen capacities for managing social and environmental risks; and address complaints from project-affected people. At the heart of the standards are the three normative United Nations Development Group principles: a human-rights based approach, gender equality and environmental sustainability. The cross-cutting principles provide the foundation for a set of project-level standards that include:

- Biodiversity conservation and sustainable natural resource management
- Climate change mitigation and adaptation
- Community health, safety and working conditions
- Cultural heritage
- Displacement and resettlement
- Indigenous peoples
- Pollution prevention and resource efficiency

The proposed standards also outline a policy delivery process that includes screening, assessment, management, stakeholder engagement, dispute resolution, access to information, monitoring, reporting and compliance.

The standards will be underpinned by a social and environmental compliance review process to respond to claims of non-compliance by UNDP with applicable environmental and social policies; and a dispute resolution process to ensure that individuals, peoples and communities affected by UNDP projects have access to appropriate dispute resolution procedures for hearing and addressing project-related disputes.

62. It is anticipated that additional global funds, such as the Green Climate Fund, would also require that some form of fiduciary standards or safeguards be in place for their grantees.

63. Several United Nations entities are thus embarking on efforts to introduce social and environmental safeguards and standards. In order to help to ensure increased coordination and coherence, the Environment Management Group is currently elaborating guidance for United Nations system agencies — building on existing practice and lessons learned within the system — on how to implement the framework for advancing environmental and social sustainability (see para. 29 above). One of the key benefits of that process has been the opportunity to strengthen the network of professionals across the United Nations system working on environmental and, to some extent, social sustainability issues, and to provide a mechanism to exchange best practices and lessons learned.

VII. Role of inspections and independent evaluations

64. Independent evaluations and inspections have an important role to play in the process of mainstreaming the social, economic and environmental dimensions of sustainable development in the United Nations development system. Evaluations can also help national Governments in developing improved policy approaches in support of the implementation of sustainable development goals. Recently, the United Nations system has been making increased efforts to link the communities involved in evaluations to those engaged in mainstreaming sustainable development.

65. While accountability systems have traditionally been mostly vertical within individual development agencies, United Nations system organizations are increasingly undertaking joint approaches. Collaborative approaches to evaluation help to instil a sense of horizontal mutual accountability for results and build coherence at the system level, and can help address important knowledge gaps — all of which can help better integrate economic, social and environmental dimensions. Such approaches are also an important tool for informing United Nations reform initiatives and high-level policy discussions (see box 6).

Box 6
Examples of joint evaluations

The ongoing joint evaluation of joint gender programmes in the United Nations system is intended to provide credible and useful evaluative information on the added value and worth of joint gender programmes in the United Nations system. It also aims to identify key lessons learned, challenges and best practices related to joint gender programmes, with a view to improving those programmes. Ultimately, the evaluation aims to support future policy and guidance on the design, implementation and evaluation of joint gender programmes, and enhance the contribution of the United Nations system to advancing gender equality at the country level. Eight organizations are engaged in the evaluation.

UNEP, FAO and UNDP are conducting a joint evaluation of the United Nations Collaborative Programme on Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation in Developing Countries (UN-REDD programme). The joint evaluation is intended to make a broad and representative assessment of the programme's performance in terms of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and, to the extent possible, impact.

66. Important advances are expected to result from the 2012 quadrennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system. In its resolution 67/226, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to establish an interim coordination mechanism for system-wide evaluation of operational activities for development of the United Nations system composed of the Joint Inspection Unit, the United Nations Evaluation Group, the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and the Office of Internal Oversight Services.

67. The interim coordination mechanism is intended to support system-wide coherence and to progressively enable the assessment of whether the United Nations system is efficiently and effectively responding to global, regional and country level needs and priorities, and achieving internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals. The focus will be on, in particular, programmatic and operational synergies between different parts of the United Nations system. The purpose is to enhance accountability and learning to inform strategy and policy development. The interim coordination mechanism would be

ideally suited to evaluating whether the United Nations system is mainstreaming the three dimensions of sustainable development in specific areas of its work.

68. The General Assembly also recently adopted a new policy for independent system-wide evaluation of United Nations operational activities for development (resolution 68/229, para. 8). In that regard, it decided that two pilot evaluations would be conducted in 2014 on: meta-evaluation and synthesis of United Nations Development Assistance Framework evaluations, with a particular focus on poverty eradication; and evaluation of the contribution of the United Nations development system to strengthening national capacities for statistical analysis and data collection to support the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals and other internationally agreed development goals". The interim coordination mechanism will be used to oversee the pilot evaluations and report on lessons learned. This will be an important opportunity to evaluate a sustainable development perspective.

69. In a few years, Member States may decide to review progress made by the United Nations system in integrating economic, social and environmental dimensions in its work. To prepare the ground for such evaluations, it is important that benchmarks and indicators are set up early. This would apply not only to specific programmes or policies, but also to a system-wide action plan or framework for mainstreaming sustainable development, should it be decided to develop one.

VIII. Conclusions and recommendations

70. Strengths, challenges and gaps identified in the 2013 report of the Secretary-General report remain relevant to the current discussion on mainstreaming the three dimensions of sustainable development. Although a more integrated approach is needed, supported by several coordination mechanisms and good practices, obstacles and challenges persist. These include unclear and inconsistent terminology, sectoral silos, imbalances among the three dimensions, a lack of impact assessment processes and mechanisms, and resource constraints.

71. One of the most important developments since the previous report has been the inauguration of the high-level political forum on sustainable development. The forum will give impetus to integrating sustainable development as an overarching framework for all United Nations system intergovernmental bodies and organizations. The forum will, like the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council, require support from the United Nations system to bring further conceptual clarity to the mainstreaming approach and to identify subsequent implications for mandates, plans and implementation modalities.

72. While there has been some progress in updating the strategic plans of the funds, programmes and agencies to reflect the outcomes of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development held in 2012, more work remains to be done to mainstream sustainable development in United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks and the "Delivering as one" programmes at the country level. Progress may be expected as a result of further inter-agency collaboration with the High-level Committee on Programmes, the High-level Committee on Management and the United Nations Development Group. Also important is the ongoing work by CEB and its high-level committees in developing a set of options on how best the United Nations system can support Member States as the

international community strives to transition to a new, universal development agenda centred on sustainable development, including implementation at the country level.

73. Work undertaken in developing quality assurance and safeguard mechanisms, and in the area of joint evaluations, has been promising. It should catalyse more action towards system-wide monitoring and harmonized reporting. Additional safeguard policies should be adopted by a number of other global funds.

74. Beyond operational activities, intellectual leadership is crucial to addressing the systemic issues and shortcomings in development theory and practice that have reinforced unsustainable development paths. In that regard, organizational culture and mindset changes are needed to produce the interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary approaches and collaboration needed to advance understanding and support countries in the design of their own national strategies.

75. It is recommended that Member States:

(a) Welcome efforts by CEB to continue promoting policy coherence and system-wide coordination for accelerating the integration of the three dimensions of sustainable development in the work of the United Nations system;

(b) Call upon the United Nations system to accelerate efforts to mainstream sustainable development into strategic plans and programmes at the country level;

(c) Encourage efforts by the United Nations Evaluation Group to study how evaluation can best contribute to mainstreaming sustainable development in the work of the United Nations system;

(d) Call upon the United Nations system to establish a common repository of environmental and social assessments and related lessons learned;

(e) Encourage individual United Nations system organizations to champion the mainstreaming of economic, social and environmental dimensions, thus experimenting with new approaches and driving progress;

(f) Request the Secretary-General to report back on progress to the General Assembly through the Economic and Social Council and to the high-level political forum on sustainable development, in consultation with the United Nations system.

United Nations A/69/80–E/2014/68

General Assembly
Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
29 April 2014

Original: English

General Assembly
Sixty-ninth session
Item 70 (a) of the preliminary list*
Strengthening of the coordination of humanitarian and disaster relief assistance of the United Nations, including special economic assistance: strengthening of the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations

Economic and Social Council
Substantive session of 2014
New York, 23 June-18 July 2014
Item 7 of the provisional agenda**
Special economic, humanitarian and disaster relief assistance

Strengthening of the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report has been prepared pursuant to General Assembly resolution 46/182, in which the Assembly requested the Secretary-General to report annually to the Assembly and the Economic and Social Council on the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance. The report is also submitted in response to Assembly resolution 68/102 and Economic and Social Council resolution 2013/6. The period covered by the report is January to December 2013.

The report describes the major humanitarian trends and challenges over the past year and analyses a number of thematic issues, including reducing vulnerability and managing risk; transformation through innovation; serving the needs of people in conflict; and humanitarian effectiveness. The report provides an overview of current efforts to improve humanitarian coordination and response and provides recommendations for further improvement.

* A/69/50.
** E/2014/1/Rev.1.

14-03713 (E) 210514

Please recycle

I. Introduction

1. Throughout 2013, the United Nations and its partners continued to face major challenges in responding to humanitarian needs generated by conflicts and natural disasters throughout the world. By the end of 2013, the number of people internally displaced by armed conflict and generalized violence had increased to over 33.2 million, the highest figure recorded by the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre. Although an estimated 1 million people were able to return home in 2013, over 8.1 million were newly displaced.[1] The number of people fleeing their homes across borders also continued to increase dramatically. In mid-2013, the global refugee population stood at 11.1 million, 600,000 higher than six months earlier, and the figure was considered likely to increase.[2]

2. The Centre for Research on the Epidemiology of Disasters recorded 334 natural disasters in 2013, which claimed an estimated 22,600 lives, affected 97 million people and caused over US$ 118 billion in damages. Asia continued to be the region most impacted by natural disasters, with almost half (160) of the disasters occurring in the region, accounting for 88 per cent of the number of people killed.

3. The scale of needs in 2013 and the outlook for 2014 continue the upward trend of the last decade. In 2014, 52 million people will be targeted to receive international humanitarian assistance through the inter-agency appeal process and a record $15.6 billion will be requested for humanitarian action in 25 countries. These increasing needs, the international community's collective inability to resolve protracted crises and the convergence of various global challenges have severely hindered the operational and financial capacity of Governments and humanitarian organizations to respond adequately.

4. This underscores the need to change the way Member States, the United Nations and its partners, affected communities and first responders, the private sector, diaspora organizations and other civil society groups collaborate, coordinate and prepare for and respond to humanitarian crises. The process leading up to the World Humanitarian Summit will provide an opportunity for all relevant stakeholders to consider how the international community can better respond to humanitarian situations and what more can be done to prevent them from occurring in the future.

II. Overview of humanitarian emergencies

A. Complex emergencies

5. In the Middle East region, the humanitarian situation in the Syrian Arab Republic continued to deteriorate rapidly. By the end of the reporting period, the number of people in need had risen to 9.3 million, including 6.5 million internally displaced persons. At least another 2.3 million people had sought refuge in Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon and Turkey, as well as Egypt and other countries, creating significant pressure on the economic and social sectors of those countries and on the

[1] Data on disaster-induced displacement for 2013 were not available at the time of submission of the report.

[2] End-of-year data for 2013 were not available at the time of submission of the report.

communities that host many of the refugees. The situation is particularly dire for millions of people living in hard-to-access and besieged areas, many of whom have not been reached with assistance for over a year.

6. In Yemen, sectarian and inter-tribal fighting continued to create displacement and limit returns. In October 2013, new fighting erupted in northern Yemen, where about 300,000 people continued to live in protracted displacement with limited prospects of returning to their areas of origin. In the south, almost all those displaced by the 2011-2012 conflict in Abyan — about 162,000 — have returned home, but face persistent security challenges.

7. In the Occupied Palestinian Territory, the humanitarian situation continued to deteriorate in 2013. The number of people displaced by demolitions or evictions in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, increased from 886 in 2012 to 1,103 in 2013. Despite some adjustments made by the Israeli authorities in recent years, the blockade on the Gaza Strip continues to cause high levels of unemployment and food insecurity, leaving the majority of people in Gaza dependent on aid. Extremely limited movement of people in and out of Gaza through the Erez and Rafah crossings continued to affect the civilian population, including patients awaiting medical treatment.

8. The reporting period also saw the intensification of a number of conflicts in Africa. The security and humanitarian situation in the Central African Republic deteriorated significantly in December 2013 when renewed fighting between ex-Seleka and anti-Balaka elements deteriorated into generalized inter-communal violence. An estimated 2.3 million people, more than half the country's population, are in need of urgent humanitarian assistance. By the end of the reporting period, almost 1 million people had been displaced.

9. In South Sudan, 1 million people faced acute food insecurity caused by displacement resulting from inter-communal violence as well as seasonal flooding. The eruption of violence in Juba in December 2013 and the subsequent sharp deterioration of the security situation increased humanitarian needs and displaced hundreds of thousands of people both within South Sudan and into neighbouring countries. By the end of 2013, South Sudan also hosted some 220,000 refugees and had absorbed some 1.9 million returnees since 2007.

10. In the Sudan, inter-tribal conflict and sporadic clashes in Darfur displaced close to 400,000 people, bringing the total number of the internally displaced in Darfur to over 2 million. The humanitarian operating environment in Darfur remained extremely challenging owing to insecurity, access constraints and reduced funding. Humanitarian partners could not reach an estimated 800,000 people in areas controlled by the Sudan People's Liberation Movement-North in South Kordofan and Blue Nile States from within the Sudan. In addition, over half a million Sudanese remained in refugee camps in Chad, Ethiopia and South Sudan.

11. In Mali, 3 million people were affected by food insecurity by the end of 2013. Approximately 137,000 displaced people returned to the north despite prevailing insecurity, inter-ethnic violence, food scarcity and the lack of basic social services. At the end of 2013, there were more than 254,800 internally displaced persons in Mali and over 167,700 Malian refugees in Burkina Faso, Mauritania and Niger.

12. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, at the end of 2013 there were nearly 3 million internally displaced persons — many displaced multiple times. Almost

430,000 Congolese were living as refugees and asylum seekers in neighbouring countries, while the Democratic Republic of the Congo itself continued to host some 260,000 refugees, including over 65,000 people arriving from the Central African Republic since December 2012. Food insecurity affected 6.7 million people and half of the children under the age of 5 remained chronically malnourished, including in more peaceful areas of the country.

13. In Somalia, for the first time in five years and despite ongoing fighting in some parts of the country, the number of people in need of life-saving assistance decreased — from over 1 million to 857,000 — reflecting modest gains in food security. However, some 2 million people continue to live on the verge of food and nutrition insecurity and require support. Malnutrition rates remain among the highest in the world, with one in seven children under the age of 5 estimated to be acutely malnourished. An estimated 1.1 million people are internally displaced and nearly 1 million Somalis continue to live in neighbouring countries as refugees.

14. In the Asia-Pacific region, inter-communal tensions and violence spread in Myanmar from Rakhine State to other areas of the country, most notably to Meiktila, where 44 people were killed and over 12,000 displaced in March 2013. Over 140,000 people remain displaced in Rakhine State, and 100,000 people in Kachin following renewed clashes in October-November and continuing difficulty in accessing areas beyond the Government's control.

15. In Afghanistan, more than 124,000 people were newly displaced in 2013 by the ongoing conflict, bringing the total number of displaced people to 631,000. In Pakistan, approximately 1 million people remained displaced in Khyber Pakhtunkwa and the Federally Administered Tribal Areas. In 2013, more than 108,000 internally displaced returned home with assistance from the Government. In addition, 1.6 million Afghan refugees reside in Pakistan, constituting the world's largest protracted refugee situation.

16. In the Philippines, fighting between armed groups and violent clan feuds continued in Mindanao, where over 140 people were killed and 150,000 displaced. Approximately half of the displaced returned home in late 2013. The lack of available land for resettlement and relocation forms a major constraint for the remaining internally displaced persons.

B. Disasters associated with natural hazards

17. Typhoon Haiyan (locally known as Yolanda) made landfall in the Philippines on 8 November, resulting in the largest loss of life from a natural disaster in 2013. Over 14 million people were affected, including 5.4 million children. Government sources reported at least 6,200 deaths and 1,700 people missing. Over 4 million people were displaced and over 1 million homes were damaged, half of them destroyed. Haiyan came less than one month after an earthquake measuring 7.2 on the Richter scale which hit the nearby island province of Bohol.

18. In Pakistan, monsoon flooding affected approximately 1.5 million people, a significant decrease from previous years (18 million in 2010 and 5 million in 2011 and 2012). In the Islamic Republic of Iran, an earthquake impacted western Balochistan in April, followed by a major earthquake in Balochistan in September, affecting 215,000 people and killing over 400.

19. In the Sahel region, 11.4 million people remained food insecure while 5 million children were at risk of malnutrition. Vulnerable communities continued to feel the impact of the 2012 food and nutrition crisis, including high levels of indebtedness and the need for some people to sell what few assets they still possessed. Despite cereal production surpluses in most of the Sahel countries, a combination of factors, including chronic vulnerability to repeated shocks, have left millions of people unable to recover from the 2012 food and nutrition crisis. Close to 500,000 people were affected by floods in the Sahel, an estimated 233,000 of them in Niger.

20. During 2013, Southern Africa experienced several major disasters, causing at least 191 deaths and affecting an estimated 519,000 people. Heavy rains caused flooding across Mozambique, while Tropical Cyclone Haruna made landfall over southwest Madagascar. The Seychelles declared a state of emergency in three districts owing to floods and landslides. A combination of floods, drought, cyclones and locust/army worm infestation led the region to experience one of the worst food insecurity situations in years, affecting an estimated 15 million people.

21. Haiti continued to recover from the multiple shocks suffered in the last few years, but critical needs remained, with an estimated 3 million people with chronic and acute needs requiring life- and livelihood-saving interventions. Following the 2010 earthquake, over 146,000 people remained displaced, living in 271 displaced persons' sites. Many of the sites are located on private land, so people are at risk of forcible eviction. In 2013, cholera infection rates continued to decrease to some 58,500 recorded cases, compared to 101,700 in 2012.

III. Progress in the coordination of humanitarian action

22. In 2013, the United Nations and its partners continued to improve the quality and effectiveness of humanitarian action, including through the Inter-Agency Standing Committee transformative agenda.[3]

Humanitarian programme cycle

23. An important element of the transformative agenda was the introduction in 2013 of improvements to the humanitarian programme cycle concept. The programme cycle is designed to strengthen the way in which humanitarian actors work collectively, including with and in support of Governments, to help meet the needs of people affected by natural disasters and conflict. The programme cycle consists of five elements: needs assessment and analysis; strategic response planning; resource mobilization; implementation and monitoring; and operational review and evaluation. Coordination and information management are key enablers for each of these steps, as effective, strategic and accountable humanitarian action is based on assessments and analysis of needs.

[3] Although fully supportive of the transformative agenda process, in order to maintain their independence, the International Committee of the Red Cross and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, which are not members of, but standing invitees to, the Inter-Agency Standing Committee, are not signatories to the 2012 transformative agenda protocols.

24. In 2013, particular emphasis was placed on improving the first two elements of the cycle, needs assessment and analysis and strategic planning. The humanitarian needs overview aims to better inform joint planning and provides a comprehensive analysis of a crisis and the prioritization of needs. Agencies or clusters undertake separate assessments and the data are then aggregated and analysed to produce a shared picture of the humanitarian situation. Assessments are undertaken in consultation with the affected Government, international, national and local humanitarian organizations and people affected by the crisis.

25. On the basis of this humanitarian needs overview, a strategic response plan is developed. The strategic response plan is intended to be a "road map" for humanitarian organizations to identify strategic objectives and guide project and programme design: it outlines what the humanitarian country team is trying to achieve, where the work will be carried out and what resources are required. It also serves as the overall framework for collective response monitoring.

26. The programme cycle is not a new concept. For protracted crises, most of the above elements were featured in the annual consolidated appeals process and published in country-specific appeal documents. The new approach to the cycle involves a separation of these elements into distinct, more manageable and better-supported processes and products in order to improve the quality of each element and to ensure that the cycle is a continuous process during the year. It ensures a more inclusive and consultative approach which results in improved support to countries in meeting humanitarian needs and greater accountability to people affected by crises. During the period under review, the revised programme cycle approach was used in 22 countries.

27. Over the coming year the humanitarian programme cycle will continue to be refined and the humanitarian needs overviews and strategic response plans adjusted on the basis of lessons learned during 2013. Preliminary feedback indicates that the revised humanitarian programme cycle resulted in stronger needs analysis and more focused strategic response plans, although the quality of the processes and outputs varied. The prioritization of needs in some countries was also challenging, particularly in places marked by high levels of poverty. The elements found to be in need of strengthening include the quality of the data used to underpin the humanitarian needs overview; inclusion of the different needs of women, girls, boys and men and persons with disabilities throughout the programme cycle; making protection concerns more operational in the strategic response plans; and inter-cluster coordination mechanisms. Further operational guidance is also required on how to engage local non-governmental organizations and foster participation by people affected by crisis throughout the cycle.

Information management

28. Poor baseline data, insufficient consolidation and weak analysis, the inability of different actors responding to a crisis to exchange information quickly and information not being sufficiently used to inform decision-making can be detrimental to effective humanitarian action. Information management is therefore critical to saving lives; without it, people cannot access services or make the best decisions for themselves and their communities, and Governments and humanitarian organizations will make decisions without an accurate overview of the situation. This has an impact on how, where and to whom assistance and protection are provided.

29. During the reporting period, humanitarian agencies and partners continued to find ways to better harness information and technology to benefit people affected by crises as well as responders. Greater attention was given to communicating with communities through all available channels, including radio, television, text messaging and newsletters, to deliver vital information and ensure that responders receive information from affected communities. For example, in the aftermath of Typhoon Haiyan in the Philippines, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs of the Secretariat worked with a global and national network of telecommunications providers and humanitarian partners to reach some 1.2 million people with life-saving information and to open channels of communication for vital feedback on the provision of assistance.

30. With the expansion of technology, the availability and volume of information in crisis situations has grown exponentially. For this information to be useful to the humanitarian community, it must be collected from a wide array of sources and transformed from raw data into information that decision makers can use quickly to help save lives. Pilot projects are under way to make relevant global and operational data more easily available to humanitarian decision makers. In 2013, ReliefWeb Labs launched the Humanitarian Data Exchange project, which aims to create a platform where information collected from multiple sources can be aggregated, stored and transformed into useful data for the humanitarian community. The project is working to create a future where humanitarian data are available in real time, from any device and location, so that Governments, humanitarian organizations and affected people can all work from a common knowledge and information base.

Understanding the different needs of affected people

31. Member States and humanitarian organizations need to ensure that preparedness efforts, humanitarian action and financing meet the distinct needs and priorities of different segments of the population according to sex, age and disability. A number of steps can be taken to improve humanitarian action for all and strengthen accountability to people affected by crisis.

32. Given the different needs, capacities, challenges and experiences of women, children, adolescents, persons with disabilities and older persons, these groups' participation in decision-making processes is essential to ensure that humanitarian programming is appropriate and effective. In 2013, humanitarian actors increased their efforts to involve different segments of the population in decision-making processes. For example, some cluster project implementation committees required 50 per cent representation of women. Making greater use of community capacities and structures such as women's associations and youth groups will help to improve participation in decision-making and in turn contribute to the development of durable solutions, strategies and responses.

33. This inclusive approach should be integral to all phases of the humanitarian programme cycle. Needs identification and prioritization processes should be based on community participatory methodologies that adequately and equitably engage women and men of all ages, including persons with disabilities. The practice of systematically collecting, analysing and using sex- and age-disaggregated data and prioritizing gender and age analysis is fundamental in this respect. While the collection of data disaggregated by sex, age and disability has progressed, more

effort is required to ensure that disaggregated data are maintained throughout the collation process, subjected to analysis and used in programme planning.

34. In 2013, Inter-Agency Standing Committee partners continued to take steps to implement the Committee principals' commitments to improving accountability to affected populations.[4] This included the deployment of a coordinator and the launch of the first action plan for accountability to affected populations in the Philippines. This resulted in programming adjustments being made by various United Nations agencies and non-governmental partners on the basis of suggestions and concerns raised through consultations with women, girls, boys and men of all ages and persons with disabilities. In going forward, more needs to be done to collectively clarify what accountability to affected populations means practically at the field level in order to avoid overlapping mechanisms and an inefficient use of resources. It will also be important to ensure that initiatives integrate existing national and local accountability mechanisms and provide more opportunities for the voices of all affected people to be heard in the programmes and coordination structures designed to serve them.

Protection

35. Humanitarian action is based on a number of principles, including humanity, which requires the provision of life-saving assistance, protecting people from violence and upholding their rights. The Inter-Agency Standing Committee principals adopted a statement on 17 December 2013, which affirms that the protection of all persons affected by conflict and disaster, and those at risk, must inform humanitarian decision-making and response. The statement complements and reinforces the "Rights up front" action plan, which aims to strengthen United Nations action to protect people, wherever they may be, from serious violations of international human rights and humanitarian law.

36. A central component of protecting people is understanding their rights and different needs, particularly those of certain groups that may be particularly vulnerable to protection risks, and helping to ensure that crises do not result in further vulnerability or threats to their rights. For example, displacement can lead to people losing their personal documentation, at times resulting in a loss of "legal personality" that can hinder people's access to certain services and limit their freedom of movement. The destruction of schools disrupts education and places children at greater risk of other violations. The loss of community support structures can result in increased isolation of people with disabilities, exposing them to further risk of exploitation and abuse. Crises are also highly disruptive to family and social structures and create new financial demands. Adolescent girls often bear the brunt of these burdens and can be forced into early marriage or sexually abused or exploited, often resulting in dangerous early and unwanted pregnancies. Changes in gender roles resulting from disasters can also raise tensions at the household level and increase the risk of gender-based violence.

37. There are a number of ways that Member States and humanitarian organizations can strengthen the protection of people affected by crises. National authorities, communities and humanitarian organizations can plan and prepare for

[4] In December 2011, the principals of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee endorsed five commitments on accountability to affected populations: leadership, transparency, feedback and complaints, participation and design, monitoring and evaluation.

crises in a way that reduces the risk that people's rights may be violated or their ability to exercise their rights compromised. These efforts can include developing preparedness and contingency plans in consultation with civil society groups and enacting appropriate laws and policies focused on vulnerable groups. In the aftermath of a disaster, the quick restoration of basic services such as education can protect children and adolescents from being exposed to the most acute physical and psychosocial risks, including trafficking, gender-based violence, child labour and recruitment. The provision of sexual and reproductive health services, including emergency reproductive health kits, can help assure safe deliveries. Dignity kits can provide culturally sensitive basic necessities for women and girls of reproductive age, and items such as flashlights and whistles can be used to alert others to a threat of gender-based violence.

Humanitarian financing

38. In 2013, 95 countries, as well as numerous multilateral and regional organizations, private sector organizations and individuals, contributed a total of $14.4 billion in funding to multilateral inter-agency response plans and complementary humanitarian action.[5] This was an increase of $1.6 billion from 2012, largely owing to the magnitude of the crisis in the Syrian Arab Republic and the response to Typhoon Haiyan in the Philippines.

39. During the reporting period, Member States and the private sector contributed $474 million to the Central Emergency Response Fund, the highest-ever annual total. These funds enabled the Emergency Relief Coordinator to allocate $482 million for urgent humanitarian response in 45 countries and territories. More than 65 per cent of the funding was used to respond to complex emergencies, 20 per cent to natural disasters and 14 per cent went to other protracted humanitarian emergencies.

40. Country-based pooled funds — common humanitarian funds and emergency response funds — received a total of $419 million from 20 Member States and private donors and allocated $397 million to complex emergencies and natural disasters in 17 countries. Country-based pooled funds played a key role in promoting coordinated humanitarian response across a wide range of partners, with 59 per cent of the funds supporting national and international non-governmental organizations. The funds also facilitated early action by humanitarian partners, which helped to mitigate the risks of crises deepening and reduced the longer-term costs of assistance. Discussions are also ongoing on how the country-based pooled funds can appropriately and strategically support resilience initiatives.

41. While the Central Emergency Response Fund has been crucial in supporting coordinated humanitarian action and strengthened leadership in nearly every major emergency worldwide, with needs and funding requirements continuing to increase, it is essential that the resources channelled through the Fund be utilized in the most strategic manner. To continue to strengthen the strategic use of the Fund, humanitarian coordinators and humanitarian country teams need to take a number of factors into account in allocating resources, including timing; intended impact; implementation capacity; the number of projects supported; geographical priorities, coherence and complementarity with other funding streams; and how the funds can be used to secure additional funding for the response to a crisis.

[5] As reported to the Financial Tracking Service (http://fts.unocha.org/) as at 14 March 2014.

42. The growth of cash-based programming — the distribution of cash or vouchers, instead of goods or services, to people in need — may also impact the financing and delivery of assistance in the future. Cash-based programming has most often been considered as an alternative to food aid, but is increasingly being used in almost all humanitarian sectors, in different settings (urban, rural or camp) and in all phases from preparedness to relief and development. Where appropriate, cash-based programming has the potential to be a cost-effective intervention that can more accurately reflect the needs, capacities and priorities of crisis-affected communities.

IV. Towards more inclusive, interoperable and effective international humanitarian action

43. Preparations are under way for the World Humanitarian Summit to be held in Istanbul in 2016. This initiative of the Secretary-General comes at an opportune time, with widespread recognition that the humanitarian landscape has changed tremendously over the past few decades. The Summit will provide an opportunity for a global consultation to help build more inclusive and diverse humanitarian action and set a common humanitarian agenda for the future. Four themes will serve as broad categories to guide the extensive and inclusive consultations: reducing vulnerability and managing risk; transformation through innovation; serving the needs of people in conflict; and humanitarian effectiveness.

A. Reducing vulnerability and managing risks of humanitarian crises

44. The 2014 global humanitarian appeal targets 52 million people to receive international humanitarian assistance, yet this is only a fraction of the total numbers of people affected by conflicts and disasters, most of whom are not assisted through inter-agency appeals. Over the last decade the global funding requirements of inter-agency appeals have increased by 430 per cent and protracted or recurrent crises have become the norm. In 2012, of the 22 countries with an inter-agency appeal, 21 had experienced at least one other crisis in the previous 10 years. Eight of those countries had had eight or more crises during the same period. A convergence of global trends, including climate change, population growth, unplanned urbanization and food and water insecurity, are eroding people's ability to cope with shocks, making crises more protracted and more recurrent and undermining sustainable institution-building and development. The international humanitarian system is being stretched beyond what it could ever deliver, and caught in the gap are millions of people who fluctuate between states of urgent need for assistance and protracted vulnerability. Continuing to fund crisis response without investing more in managing the underlying risks is not sustainable.

45. Recent reports, including the World Development Report 2014, the study entitled *Saving Lives Today and Tomorrow: Managing the Risk of Humanitarian Crises*, issued by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and the study commissioned by the Inter-Agency Standing Committee and prepared by the Overseas Development Institute, *Dare to Prepare: Taking Risk Seriously*, provide further evidence and deliver the same message: a fundamental shift is needed towards an approach that not only improves the response to humanitarian crises but

anticipates, prevents and mitigates their recurrence. A change in the "business model" can only be achieved through investment in building national and local capacity to manage crisis risk; humanitarian and development organizations overcoming and transcending the institutional divide that separates them; adequate financing; and leadership and commitment by affected Governments, donors and humanitarian and development organizations.

46. National and local capacity are critical to successful risk management. New partnerships and incentives at the local level to jointly analyse and tackle risks, share early warning information and establish reliable triggers for action are helping to save lives. In India, early action ahead of Cyclone Phalin in October 2013 averted a major disaster. Thanks to effective risk management by national authorities, more than a million people were evacuated from affected areas. Only 38 casualties were reported, compared to over 10,000 lives lost during a similar cyclone in 1999.

47. In concert with national authorities, the United Nations and relevant partners need to strengthen joint planning and coordination of programmes and resources to provide predictable, reliable support to national capacity development for preparedness. This support should recognize the comparative advantage of each organization. Strengthening national preparedness can only succeed if humanitarian and development actors coordinate their resources, skills and action to support national and local capacity.

48. In 2013, the Inter-Agency Standing Committee, together with the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction and the United Nations Development Group, finalized the Common Framework for Preparedness, which recognizes that national and local governments have the lead role for preparedness and should be supported by the international community where this is consistent with humanitarian principles and human rights norms. The successful implementation of the Common Framework will require continued leadership and engagement from national Governments, donors and humanitarian and development organizations.

49. Humanitarian organizations are working with Governments to build their capacity to manage crisis risk; but they cannot do it alone. It requires humanitarian and development communities to transcend the institutional barriers that separate them. Working in these silos can inhibit the development of programmes that help people manage risk and can prevent a strategic approach being taken to meeting people's immediate needs and at the same time addressing the underlying risks and vulnerabilities which will help to reduce needs in the future. Humanitarian and development actors need to agree on common risk-management and resilience objectives, achievable through joint analysis, planning, programming and funding.

50. Investment in preparedness — not only through funding, but in the implementation of preparedness programmes — has the potential to transform the scale and approach of humanitarian action. The recent studies by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, the World Bank and the Overseas Development Institute provide evidence of the benefit-to-cost ratio of emergency preparedness and point to a fundamental flaw in the financing architecture. Less than 0.5 per cent of the $3 trillion in development commitments in the past 20 years has funded prevention and preparedness.

51. New funding mechanisms are not necessarily required, but funding based on objective and shared assessment of risks is essential. It is also important to explore

innovative risk-sharing mechanisms such as insurance, risk pooling and risk mutualization. In Haiti, the Microinsurance Catastrophe Risk Organization, supported by Mercy Corps and other partners, is helping to protect community entrepreneurs from disaster risk. In the Pacific region, the World Bank risk insurance pilot programme is for the first time using scientific measurements such as earthquake magnitude indexes as the basis for a rapid insurance mechanism for small island countries.

52. Finally, leadership and commitment by national Governments and donors to preventing and mitigating the risk of crises is critical. Too often, managing risk outside of crisis is not given priority by Governments or organizations that could support it. It is still easier to respond to actual emergency needs than to invest in risk management over the longer term in the absence of a crisis, particularly where Governments face competing priorities. As a result, national development plans too often neglect addressing the underlying risks that can lead to humanitarian crises. Insufficient focus is given to analysing and addressing the underlying factors that lead to conflict. Funding is often not directed to the countries most at risk. Governments and humanitarian and development organizations do not systematically make the best use of the information available. Ultimately, inertia and inaction in the face of known risks are the greatest disaster risks in themselves, so a change in approach will not be possible without strong leadership at the global, national and organizational levels.

53. The shift towards an anticipatory approach to disasters ultimately requires Governments — affected countries and donors — and all relevant stakeholders to make preventing future humanitarian crises a priority. As the international community prepares for post-2015 development and disaster risk reduction frameworks, and the World Humanitarian Summit in 2016, it will be important to recognize that development cannot be sustainable if the risk of crises is not taken into account and proactively addressed as a joint priority.

B. Transformation through innovation

54. In the last decade, the international community has faced rapid social, technological, environmental and economic changes. In evolving with these changes, the humanitarian action of the future will look very different from that of today. A new approach is required to adapt to the changes and bring about improvements in humanitarian action. Member States, the United Nations and its partners need to constantly question the way the humanitarian system works, look outside the international system for ideas and allow for investments in new ideas and solutions that can support a rapid and effective response. Innovation should be embraced by the humanitarian community.

55. Already, innovative approaches are being driven by Governments and people affected by crisis — such as the text messaging-based post-disaster early warning system for disease in the Philippines. A number of donors are increasing their funding to areas of work which promote innovation and many organizations are creating innovation units to improve the way they learn and adapt their practices. For example, UNICEF has 12 innovation labs globally and UNHCR has a dedicated innovation team that supports five labs and 20 innovation fellows globally.

However, there is still only limited donor support and few alternative sources of financing to develop innovative approaches to humanitarian work.

56. New types of partnership are also being developed. Recent examples of public-private projects include collaboration with the Groupe Speciale Mobile Association (GSMA), the mobile-phone industry association, to map where cell phone coverage was available after Typhoon Haiyan; the World Food Programme's partnership with MasterCard to provide cash transfers for food and other basic services; the Ikea Foundation's support to UNHCR Innovation; and the displacement tracking matrix designed by the International Organization for Migration, which utilizes advanced technology from private sector partners to identify the highest priority areas for interventions within displaced communities. A more rigorous process of identifying areas where the humanitarian community, the private sector and other actors have a common interest in collaborating will be an important step in finding new ways to solve humanitarian challenges.

57. The key to successful innovation is a strong evidence base and proof that an idea is not just new, but better. In addition to greater investment in basic research, monitoring and evaluation, more collaboration with research institutions and better sharing of results across organizations will help identify the innovative ideas with the greatest potential impact. Investment in research and development to drive innovation is a way to meet growing and changing needs.

58. Ideally, innovative practices should draw on the knowledge of affected people to develop locally sustainable solutions. From the outset, projects must be designed through a community-centred lens and should be implemented in line with humanitarian principles so that they are inclusive, accessible and uphold the "do no harm" approach. There is a need to consolidate and develop both ethical guidelines and operational safeguards to address issues of exploitation, privacy, community participation, accountability and unintended negative impacts.

C. Serving the needs of people affected by conflict

59. While the past decade has been marked by an increase in devastating natural disasters, complex emergencies have remained at the centre of humanitarian action. Between 2002 and 2013, the United Nations and its partners launched almost 340 humanitarian appeals for a total of over $96 billion. Of that amount, $83 billion was requested to assist people affected by conflicts and approximately $13 billion to address the consequences of natural or other disasters. At the end of 2013, each of the 10 largest consolidated humanitarian appeals involved situations of armed conflict. Most of these crises have now been going on for over five years.

60. Ultimately, parties to a conflict bear the primary responsibility for the safety and well-being of people in areas under their control. Their compliance with their obligations under international humanitarian law and human rights law is paramount to ensuring the protection of people affected by conflict. However, too often these obligations are ignored or flagrantly violated.

61. As a result, the human cost of conflicts is staggering. The direct consequences of conflict for women, girls, boys and men include deaths, wounds, disabilities, torture, cruel and inhumane treatment and gender-based violence. However, conflict also limits or prevents people's access to basic services, undermines their ability to

generate sustainable livelihoods and destroys or damages infrastructure. It is widely recognized that conflict sets back the development of a country by decades, including critical institutional developments such as justice systems, leading to prolonged suffering and creating further vulnerabilities to disaster risks. While the impacts are visible and obvious, work should continue to improve casualty recording.

62. Many of the key features of conflict are recurring, last for decades and serve as sad reminders of the need for principled humanitarian action in conflict settings. A few of them are considered in more detail below.

Internal displacement

63. For millions of people, fleeing their homes and seeking safety within and across borders has become their only option when seeking to survive violence and is only the beginning of an ordeal that may last for years or even decades, marked by trauma, impoverishment and reduced access to basic services. While the right to freedom of movement and to leave one's country and seek asylum must always be respected, displacement should never be accepted as inevitable. The majority of those displaced by conflict are often unable to return for years, sometimes never, and therefore require sustained and consistent support.

64. Some 80 per cent of the 28.8 million people who were estimated to be internally displaced owing to conflict and violence in 2012 lived in urban and non-camp settings, often residing with host communities. Yet, internally displaced persons living in camps or other "gathered" settings remain more likely to receive protection and assistance. Affected countries and humanitarian and development organizations must do more to meet the needs of internally displaced persons in urban and non-camp settings. "Combined" approaches to provide protection and assistance to internally displaced persons and host community members, as well as targeted interventions to address the specific assistance and protection needs of the internally displaced must be strengthened, including through respect of international humanitarian law and human rights law and greater application of the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement. With national Governments in the lead, all actors, including the international community, must make greater efforts to achieve durable solutions that ensure that internally displaced persons' needs are met, including long-term security, access to social services, adequate housing, livelihoods, personal documentation and access to justice. A more systematic implementation of the Framework on Durable Solutions for Internally Displaced Persons promulgated by the Inter-Agency Standing Committee, as well as other relevant international guidelines, is instrumental in that respect.

Explosive weapons in populated areas

65. The use of explosive weapons with wide-area effects in urban and populated areas is of increasing concern. During 2013, almost 38,000 people were reported killed or injured by such weapons, 82 per cent of them civilians. When explosive weapons were used in populated areas, 93 per cent of the casualties were reportedly civilians.[6] In addition to death and injury, civilians are often displaced for long periods and in precarious conditions. Housing, health facilities and essential infrastructure are often damaged or destroyed. Education is also disrupted and

[6] Action on Armed Violence, "Monitoring Explosive Violence 2013" (April 2014).

livelihoods are devastated. The use of explosive weapons in populated areas has a dramatic impact on post-conflict reconstruction. Their remnants are a threat to people, sometimes for generations.

66. Humanitarian actors such as the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, the International Committee of the Red Cross and many non-governmental organizations, supported by several Member States, have started to address this growing problem through a number of consultations that are aimed at promoting recognition of the humanitarian impact of explosive weapons with wide-area effects in populated areas, strengthening the political commitment to address the problem and developing practical measures based on existing good practice.

Humanitarian access

67. Reaching people affected by conflict is not only a prerequisite for effective humanitarian action but gives effect to core principles of international humanitarian law — to save lives and reduce unnecessary and prolonged suffering. Parties to armed conflicts have the primary responsibility to meet the basic needs of civilians in areas under their control. When they fail to do so, impartial humanitarian action becomes necessary to provide the people affected with supplies essential to their survival. The timeliness of humanitarian response is critical to its effectiveness in saving lives. Under international humanitarian law, the consent of parties concerned is required before humanitarian relief actions may be implemented. Parties to the conflict must allow and facilitate rapid and unimpeded access to humanitarian relief for all civilians in need.

68. Denying much-needed assistance or preventing impartial aid organizations from reaching people in need without valid reasons is arbitrary and unjustified. It goes against the very essence of the principle of humanity. In this regard, efforts are under way to engage with Member States, legal experts and humanitarian and civil society actors to clarify the notion of arbitrary withholding of consent from a legal perspective and consider options for providing relevant guidance.

69. In situations of armed conflict, the combination of violence against humanitarian workers, active hostilities and restrictions on movement has severely affected people's access to humanitarian assistance and protection. Bureaucratic impediments can have a serious impact on the speed of a humanitarian response. To allow for an effective response, procedures for the deployment of humanitarian personnel, assets and goods need to be simple and fast. Steps that can be taken by affected Governments to achieve this include reducing delays for customs clearance and visas; lifting restrictions on essential items, including communication and security equipment; removing taxes and fees on relief items and activities; lifting restrictions on in-country movements for humanitarian personnel and goods; and establishing a focal point for legal registration within the country.

70. Good practices and mechanisms are now well established in the context of disasters, such as the Guidelines for the Domestic Facilitation and Regulation of International Disaster Relief and Initial Recovery Assistance, adopted at the Thirtieth International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent, held in Geneva from 26 to 30 November 2007. Member States and humanitarian organizations should explore options to develop similar guidelines and processes consistent with international humanitarian law for conflict settings.

Safety and security of humanitarian personnel

71. Humanitarian organizations operating in conflict settings increasingly face serious challenges and restrictions. For example, humanitarian workers are more at risk of direct violence. Preliminary records from the Aid Worker Security Database show that 356 aid workers were killed, kidnapped and seriously wounded in 2013,[7] the highest number ever recorded and an increase of 29 per cent from 2012. The largest proportion of aid workers killed — 56 of 127 killed (44 per cent) — were victims of targeted attacks or crossfire while delivering assistance. Improvised explosive devices and complex attacks accounted for 17 per cent of aid workers killed. More than three quarters of the victims (298 of 356) were national staff, who account for the majority of humanitarian workers.

72. Despite direct attacks against health-care personnel, facilities, vehicles and services being serious violations of international humanitarian law that can constitute war crimes,[8] the reporting period also witnessed an increased number of attacks during vaccination campaigns, as well as numerous intentional attacks on first responders. The deliberate denial of impartial health-care services to civilians and sick and wounded combatants was also observed, including the removal of medical items from aid shipments. This resulted in health-care personnel being unable to adequately address the needs of affected people and to care for the sick and wounded. The obligation to respect and protect health-care personnel, facilities and equipment lies at the core of international humanitarian law. Ensuring that parties to conflict are systematically and effectively held accountable for attacks against humanitarian and health-care personnel is an urgent priority.

Issues to consider going forward

73. The humanitarian community needs to tackle these challenges and continue to consider different ways of offering assistance and protection. New actors have also taken a larger part in humanitarian action and different models of partnerships have arisen, including through reaching people with assistance through cash-transfer programmes and remotely managing operations by utilizing local organizations and partners to deliver international assistance. The advantages and disadvantages of various models involving local and international actors will require further consideration. Humanitarian actors also need to consider issues of diversification; operating in conflict settings cannot follow a "one size fits all" approach. It requires specific skills, sensitivities and the ability to build the necessary trust with local communities and parties to a conflict. The ability to build trust and acceptance also depends on a stay-and-deliver approach that allows humanitarian actors to reach communities in the midst of conflict when it matters most and to stay at their time of greatest need.

D. Humanitarian effectiveness

74. In recent years, a variety of reform efforts have worked to improve the effectiveness of humanitarian action, including the Inter-Agency Standing

[7] As at 21 April 2014; the figures for 2013 have not been finalized.

[8] Health-care personnel, facilities, transports and services lose their protection under international humanitarian law when they commit, or are used to commit, acts harmful to the enemy.

Committee transformative agenda, the creation of professional standards for humanitarian actors, implementation of good donor practices and principles and the development of humanitarian standards and certification schemes for the provision of assistance. Steps taken to improve humanitarian financing through pooled funds have also enhanced the timeliness and flexibility of humanitarian funding. At the same time, Member States — affected countries and donors — and humanitarian organizations have recognized the need for a more profound review and improvements to the way humanitarian assistance is being delivered to meet the challenges of a changing global landscape and to respond more effectively, and with more sustainable results, to humanitarian crises. While efforts to date have helped to improve the effectiveness of humanitarian action, they have largely focused inwardly, that is, on the effectiveness of the existing international humanitarian response system.

75. In looking forward, the analysis of what is effective needs to extend beyond the international humanitarian system. It will need to recognize the different perspectives and comparative advantages of the various actors responding to a humanitarian crisis, including affected people and their governments at local and national levels, first responders, diaspora and civil society groups and the business community. Continuing to consider the context and the phase of a response will also matter. It will be further necessary to anticipate how emerging trends and challenges such as technology, the growth of middle-income countries and their own capacities, new partners and increasing needs and inequalities will change the way the needs of people affected by crises will be met in the future.

Different perspectives on effectiveness

76. It is the primary responsibility of the national and local authorities of the country affected to meet the needs of people affected by a crisis, whether in conflict or natural disaster settings. While international humanitarian organizations have a critical role to play, it is recognized that an effective response increasingly depends on the successful interplay of multiple actors in a humanitarian emergency. These other actors include first responders, civil society, national and foreign militaries, bilateral or regional governmental support, various private sector organizations (multinational, national and local) and diaspora communities, among others. Understanding their perspectives as to what they consider effective humanitarian action — their knowledge of the situation and the needs of people affected; how to respond and over what time period — is important to providing a more holistic picture of what constitutes effectiveness.

77. It is critical for all actors involved in a humanitarian response to understand what affected people, communities and countries need and what they are doing to meet their own needs, and how they can support these efforts and connect with them rather than duplicate or replace them. During and after any humanitarian crisis, people from the community and local organizations are the first responders and will be the most likely to have direct access to people in need and remain there to support recovery. National and local responders are more likely to work with existing infrastructure and markets, improving the sustainability of response efforts. Therefore, a key element of making overall humanitarian action more effective is the effectiveness of local and national humanitarian responses and understanding how other actors can complement and strengthen local and national response capacity. For example, diaspora groups, with their expertise and funding, may

sometimes be able to contribute faster and more directly than national or international entities.

78. Given the diverse range of actors engaged in responding to an emergency, when considering what constitutes effective humanitarian action, it will be less important who is delivering the assistance than how well the needs of people are being met. This will require recognition of the various actors, networks and systems and a wider understanding and respect for their comparative advantages, motivations and limitations. To achieve this, more investment is needed — outside of crises — to increase the interoperability of these different actors, including by developing predictable platforms for engagement, cooperation and coordination and a focused discussion around common objectives, standards and delivery methods with each of them.

79. These discussions will need to consider how international agencies can better connect with and support the increasing number of national disaster management authorities and national disaster response plans; how private sector interests can be reconciled with international standards of delivery and public sector donations; how to resolve tensions that arise from needing to provide life-saving assistance in conflict settings by engaging with all parties to a conflict, while at the same time contributing to longer-term government priorities on resilience and capacity-building; and how to work with actors outside the existing governmental or international response frameworks to develop common goals and standards. In the lead-up to the World Humanitarian Summit, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs will prepare a study to examine humanitarian effectiveness from different perspectives.

Context of the crisis

80. How the effectiveness of humanitarian action is measured will also depend on the context in which the emergency is taking place and the capacity and enabling environment established by the host Government or by parties to a conflict. For example, in natural disaster or chronic vulnerability settings, the capacity of local and national governments is critical for the effectiveness of the overall response. Humanitarian agencies need to work closely with these authorities in support of their efforts. However, in a conflict setting, the effectiveness of humanitarian action may depend less on the capacity of the Government, particularly where it is a party to a conflict, and more on the ability of international humanitarian agencies to engage with all parties to the conflict, based on humanitarian principles, to reach people and meet the life-saving and protection needs of the affected population.

Emerging trends and challenges

81. Humanitarian effectiveness also needs to be considered within the changing nature of the humanitarian landscape. Middle-income countries are taking greater ownership and leadership in responding to crises within their own countries, deploying increased economic and institutional capabilities. International and national corporations and local businesses are more engaged in humanitarian response. With the increased use of direct cash transfers to affected people — and growing technological and scientific advances — there are more opportunities than ever to meet the needs of affected people.

82. This is a critical time to assess what constitutes effective humanitarian action. The extent to which the international humanitarian system adapts to the changing realities, recognizing the multiplicity of options and actors, highlighting its own comparative advantages and offering to be a broker of solutions to affected Governments and people, will be critical to closing capacity and delivery gaps, strengthening global support for humanitarian action and more effectively meeting the needs of the most vulnerable.

V. Recommendations

83. On the basis of the above, the Secretary-General recommends the following:

(a) Member States, non-State actors and humanitarian organizations should continue to promote greater respect for and adherence to the humanitarian principles of humanity, impartiality, neutrality and independence;

(b) Member States and, where applicable, non-State actors should adhere to their obligations under international humanitarian and human rights law, including by allowing and facilitating the rapid and unimpeded access of humanitarian relief to affected persons in need, and recognize that such consent must not be arbitrarily withheld;

(c) Member States and, where applicable, non-State actors should adhere to their obligation to respect and protect humanitarian and health-care personnel, their transports and facilities, including by pursuing all domestic and international options to ensure accountability for all attacks in contravention of relevant international law;

(d) Member States, United Nations entities and civil society organizations should continue to promote recognition of the humanitarian impact of explosive weapons with wide-area effects in populated areas, strengthen the political commitment to address the problem and develop practical measures based on existing good practice;

(e) Member States should make further efforts to simplify and expedite procedures for the deployment of humanitarian personnel and goods, including by exploring means of adapting the good practices and mechanisms developed in the context of natural disasters to other types of crises, including conflict and chronic vulnerability settings;

(f) Member States, United Nations actors and humanitarian organizations should continue to work together to ensure that people are protected from harm and their rights upheld before and during a crisis, including by understanding the different protection needs of different people, particularly the most vulnerable, and ensuring that these needs are adequately integrated into preparedness, response, and recovery efforts;

(g) Member States, the United Nations and humanitarian organizations should strengthen their efforts to ensure better protection, assistance and development strategies for internally displaced persons, including through working together to strengthen the implementation of the Framework on Durable Solutions for Internally Displaced Persons promulgated by the Inter-Agency Standing Committee; and humanitarian organizations should improve coordination to better

address the needs of internally displaced persons, recognizing the central role of the Emergency Relief Coordinator;

(h) The United Nations and humanitarian organizations should continue efforts to strengthen needs analysis and strategic planning to ensure a better informed, more effective, transparent and collective response to the needs of people affected by crises;

(i) Member States, the United Nations and humanitarian actors should continue to identify, understand and analyse the distinct needs, challenges and coping capacities of women, girls, boys and men, including by improving the disaggregation of sex-, age- and disability-specific data during collation and their use in analysis and programme planning; strengthening the participation of all affected women, girls, boys and men in decision-making structures; and consistently utilizing the gender marker and other monitoring tools to improve gender and age analysis and track funding allocations;

(j) Member States should strengthen leadership and commitment to preventing and mitigating humanitarian crises by, inter alia, integrating risk management into national development plans, increasing funding for crisis prevention and mitigation and basing funding decisions on risk analysis to ensure that funding supports the people and countries at highest risk of crises;

(k) Humanitarian and development organizations should continue to strengthen efforts to overcome institutional barriers to working together by, inter alia, planning on the basis of a common analysis of risk, aligning planning cycles where possible and employing tools and processes to jointly analyse crisis risk;

(l) The United Nations and humanitarian organizations, together with development organizations, should continue to support national leadership in building in-country preparedness capacity, including under the Common Framework for Preparedness of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee, the United Nations Development Group and the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction;

(m) The United Nations and humanitarian organizations should continue efforts to map emergency preparedness and response capacities of affected countries, including their Governments and civil society, private sector and other relevant actors, in order to better understand how the international community can build upon and complement existing local and national capacities;

(n) The United Nations and humanitarian organizations should identify best practices and new opportunities to enhance interoperability between affected Governments, community responders, civil society, diaspora groups, humanitarian organizations, the private sector and other providers of bilateral and multilateral assistance to address capacity and resource gaps and meet the needs of affected people more effectively;

(o) Member States, the United Nations and humanitarian organizations should continue to promote innovation within the humanitarian sector by increasing investment in research, development and evaluation of new approaches to aid delivery and by reviewing policies that may contribute to unintended barriers to innovation, including humanitarian financing and procurement guidelines.